United Nations A/64/PV.110

General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

110th plenary meeting
Thursday, 19 August 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda item 70 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Draft resolution (A/64/L.66)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Members will recall that the Assembly considered, in a joint debate, agenda item 70, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", and its sub-items (a) and (b), as well as agenda item 71, "Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence", at its 59th and 60th plenary meetings, on 7 December 2009.

I should like to proudly note that my country, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, is one of the Member States that, through their letter to me dated 8 August 2010, asked for this meeting to be convened in order to show solidarity with the affected country.

At the outset, I would like to thank the ministers and high-ranking officials who are with us at this meeting to demonstrate the great importance that they attach to it. I would also like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his important efforts and for the visit he made to Pakistan. I thank him very much indeed and assure him once again that we stand with him in providing support to sisterly Pakistan and all affected citizens of that country.

As we meet, an unprecedented humanitarian disaster is unfolding in Pakistan. A staggering 20 million people stand affected by heavy rains and devastating floods. The number was estimated at around 14 million only six days ago, when I decided to convene this meeting. The pace at which this crisis has escalated is astounding. The resultant human tragedy is heart-rending. As they await help, hundreds of thousands of survivors are at serious risk. This is an extraordinary emergency situation. It requires an extraordinary response.

Today's meeting is a part of that response. It is also a direct and timely manifestation of the extraordinary convening power of the General Assembly. The high-level participation reflects the seriousness attached to the situation by the international community. This meeting, I am sure, will send out a strong message to Pakistan and its people that the world stands by them in these difficult times. It is a solemn occasion to express our solidarity and sympathy with the affected populations. More than that, today's meeting is demonstrative of the international community's commitment to act, an opportunity to step forward and show to the people and the Government of Pakistan that we are ready and willing to assist them in every possible way.

Natural and environmental disasters have also recently struck other parts of Asia and beyond, causing widespread destruction and loss of life. Severe

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flooding and landslides in China have taken a heavy toll, with more than 1,200 people killed and hundreds still missing. There has been significant destruction and loss of life due to floods in India. In Russia, wildfires have killed dozens of people and erased whole villages and city suburbs, affecting thousands more. Let me convey our condolences and solidarity with all the affected populations on these tragic losses.

Coming back to Pakistan, it is there that we are confronted with one of the most challenging disasters in recent years. I commend the efforts and determination of the people and the Government of Pakistan in coping with the situation. However, given the magnitude of the challenge, they cannot do it alone. International assistance must complement and support the national efforts.

The immensity and scale of this catastrophe is shocking. More than 10 per cent of the population of Pakistan is now affected. An estimated 20 per cent of the land area is reportedly under water. Millions of people are in immediate need of food, clean drinking water, emergency health services and shelter. We are in a race against time in reaching out to these people with the required assistance. The response so far has not been sufficient, due mainly to lack of supplies, and the relief and rescue work has also been hampered by infrastructure damage and continuing rains. To save lives, in particular to prevent the serious threat of water-borne diseases, we must act faster. That is the immediate priority.

It is encouraging that many Member States have stepped forward to help. The United Nations system has led the international response, providing food, clean water and temporary shelter to many. But many more are yet to be reached. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was himself on the ground. The United Nations has launched an initial appeal for $460 million to meet the most immediate needs. To date, barely half of that amount has been pledged. I call on all Member States to urgently bridge this gap.

Beyond this initial phase, a far greater and sustained commitment and support will be required for long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. Displacement of people, wide-scale destruction of homes, standing crops, livestock and other means of livelihood, in addition to extensive damage to roads, bridges, schools, health facilities and other infrastructure, means billions of dollars of loss to the economy, with exact figures yet to be evaluated. This will be a huge undertaking.

The draft resolution that I have presented to the Assembly in document A/64/L.66, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan", is in my view an important and timely response by this Assembly to the situation at hand. It serves three main purposes: first, it expresses strong solidarity with Pakistan and the people affected by floods; secondly, it calls for international assistance in support of the efforts of the Government of Pakistan; and thirdly, it focuses on both the emergency phase and the medium- and long-term phases requiring rehabilitation and reconstruction.

It thus provides an excellent framework for the international community to translate the expression of its solidarity by mobilizing and extending tangible support and assistance to Pakistan. Its adoption with the Assembly's full support and consensus will be but one measure of hope and relief to the affected populations in Pakistan, letting them know that the world cares and that help is on its way.

I would also like to raise two important points. First, we must support the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund in every way we can so that it can intervene in emergency situations such as this. Secondly, we must henceforth be alert and work together in dealing with climate change and its consequences. We need also to take the issue of climate change very seriously so that the forthcoming conference in Mexico will be a new opportunity for a change of attitude.

I pay tribute once again to the Secretary-General for all his efforts, and now give him the floor.

The Secretary-General: I would like to thank the representatives of Member States for coming together for the people of Pakistan.

Visiting Pakistan on Sunday, I was honoured to carry with me the sympathy and solidarity of all the world's peoples. This is what I saw: village after village washed away; roads, bridges and homes destroyed; crops and livelihoods wiped out. I met many women and men, who have very little in the best of times, awash in a sea of suffering. They shared their fears of the next wave — the next wave of water, the next wave of disease, the next wave of destruction.

The eyes see, the ears hear, yet somehow the mind struggles to grasp the full dimension of this catastrophe. Almost 20 million people need shelter, food and emergency care. That is more than the entire population hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Kashmir earthquake, Cyclone Nargis and the earthquake in Haiti combined. At least 160,000 square kilometres of land are under water — an area larger than more than half the countries of the world. Make no mistake: this is a global disaster and a global challenge. It is one of the greatest tests of global solidarity in our times.

I therefore want to thank the international community for all that it has already done. Thanks to its help, we are feeding people and providing clean water, medicine and shelter. United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations and aid groups such as the Red Cross/Red Crescent have mobilized to support the Government's response. We are getting the aid in by whatever means — helicopters, trucks and even mules. Nearly 1 million people have received a month's food rations from the World Food Programme.

Similar numbers now have emergency shelter and clean water, helped by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Organization for Migration and many others. The World Health Organization is treating health threats as they arise. But the needs are great and this disaster is far from over. The rains could continue for weeks, and only now are we beginning to understand the true scope of the disaster.

Pakistan is facing a slow-motion tsunami. Its destructive power will accumulate and grow with time. I have discussed this harsh reality with President Zardari and Prime Minister Gillani. We fully agree on what must be done.

International humanitarian organizations are straining every muscle to deliver, but they need massive additional support. Eight million people need food, water and shelter; 14 million need health care, with a special emphasis on children and pregnant women. We have issued an emergency appeal for $460 million over the next 90 days. We already have more than half — about 60 per cent — thanks to the generosity of key donors, but all of those resources are needed and they are needed now.

Pledges made today must be followed up with action — action that delivers change on the ground. And when the waters finally recede, recovery and reconstruction must begin. Agricultural losses alone will exceed $1 billion, according to the World Bank. Farmers will need seeds, fertilizers and tools to replant, lest next year's harvest be lost along with this one. In the longer term, the huge damage to infrastructure — schools, hospitals, irrigation canals, communications, transport links — must be repaired.

We are considering convening a high-level meeting on Pakistan when world leaders gather for the Millennium Development Goals summit in September. In October, the Friends of Democratic Pakistan will meet in Brussels to explore these matters in depth. And ultimately, we must recognize that climate change will bring more incidents of extreme weather. That is why we must invest more in reducing the risk of future disasters.

The United Nations has made disaster risk reduction a priority. In 2005 the Hyogo Framework offered a pragmatic blueprint for action. Last year, we introduced the first global assessment report on disaster risk reduction. Clearly, we must follow through on these recommendations.

This disaster is like few the world has ever seen. It requires a response to match. Pakistan needs a flood of support, yet in the media we hear talk of so-called fatigue. There are suggestions that Governments are reluctant to cope with yet another disaster — that they hesitate to contribute more to that part of the world. But let us remember that if anyone should be fatigued, it is the ordinary people I met in Pakistan — women, children and small farmers tired of troubles, conflict and hardship. Instead of fatigue, however, I saw determination, resilience and the hope and expectation that they will not be alone under the darkest of skies.

When faced with the tsunami, the earthquake in Haiti and other natural disasters, we showed extraordinary humanity. Let us do so again today. Together, let us stand with the people of Pakistan. Let us act so that this natural disaster does not become a man-made catastrophe. Let us give this our all.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for

Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. I welcome him to the United Nations and express our fullest solidarity with his country.

Mr. Qureshi (Pakistan): I convey to you, Sir, the gratitude of the people and Government of Pakistan for this timely initiative to convene a plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider the humanitarian situation resulting from floods in Pakistan.

Let me also thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Pakistan and the humanitarian crisis caused by the floods. The people of Pakistan have deeply appreciated the Secretary-General's close personal engagement in the rescue and relief operations in Pakistan, and his visit to the affected areas.

I would also like to thank the honourable ministers for their presence to express solidarity and support to the people of Pakistan.

What we face in Pakistan today is a natural calamity of unprecedented proportions. These are the worst monsoon floods in living memory. According to the United Nations reports, the present humanitarian crisis in Pakistan is larger than the combined effects of the tsunami and the 2005 earthquake.

Pakistanis are a resilient people. We are no strangers to challenges and difficulties. This is a nation that suffered the ravages of the 2005 earthquake and bravely bore the loss of 80,000 of our brethren. We are the people who, with relentless courage and determination, have borne the brunt of the international fight against terrorism and extremism. This is the nation that has braced itself with fortitude against the loss of thousands of its men, women and children to suicide attacks. We are the people that the international community looks towards as a bulwark against terrorism and extremism. This is the nation that now looks towards the international community to show a similar determination and humanity in its hour of need.

The situation is indeed critical and alarming. I stand before the General Assembly as the voice of 20 million Pakistanis devastated by the floods, who have lost their homes and hearths, their kith and kin, their lands and their crops, their lives and their livelihoods. One in 10 Pakistanis has been rendered destitute. Twenty per cent of our land is submerged in water.

Ours is primarily an agrarian economy. Seventy per cent of our population is employed in the agriculture sector, and that is where we have been hit the hardest. Over 17 million acres of agricultural land has been submerged. Standing crops worth billions of dollars have been destroyed. Over 3.5 million children are at high risk of contracting deadly waterborne diseases. Schools will not be opening soon after summer vacations, as they are being used to provide shelter to flood survivors.

In the province of Punjab, almost 1 million acres of cotton growing area is affected, and crops worth $1 billion have been destroyed. In the South, standing crops worth $1.2 billion over an area of 100,000 acres face complete destruction in Sindh province. In the North, over 325,000 acres of land stand submerged, and crops worth $500 million have been destroyed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. In Balochistan, villages and towns are being inundated as I speak. Over 70 per cent of the roads and bridges in the flood-stricken areas have been destroyed, with none remaining intact in the Swat valley. Over 1 million tons of wheat stored in warehouses has been swept away.

Unfortunately, these are only initial estimates, and the situation is still evolving. The situation is expected to get worse as the second and third waves of floods inundate more lands and uproot more people. The numbers will surely go up as the waters recede and the affected areas become accessible to damage assessment. The aftermath of the floods in the medium to long terms will pose more daunting challenges. The reconstruction and rehabilitation costs are going to be huge, but our immediate challenge is to meet the food, health and clean drinking water needs of the millions displaced, and to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed by the floods.

Our difficulties do not end there. Our urban infrastructure will come under severe stress as millions of people migrate to bigger cities in search of shelter and jobs. Another serious problem with long-term socio-economic implications is the loss of land and potential decline in the arability of flood-affected lands. The food security of the sixth most populous country in the world is at risk. The possible threat of food riots and related violence cannot be ruled out.

The Government of Pakistan has mobilized all its national resources to provide rescue and relief to the affected people. Hundreds of thousands have been

rescued and evacuated from riverine areas. Provision of food, shelter and clean drinking water and prevention of water-borne diseases and epidemics remain our top priorities. The entire nation stands united and determined to overcome this challenge. The people of Pakistan have opened up their hearts and hearths to their brothers and sisters.

We are also determined to turn around the economy destroyed by the floods. We have decided to set up an independent national entity to mobilize maximum domestic resources and to ensure their effective and transparent use. This entity will comprise men of integrity who will supervise the collection, management and distribution of relief funds among the flood-affected people.

Our commitment and resolve notwithstanding, the scale of the challenge is colossal, far too big for any developing country to handle alone. We hope that the international community will come forward in all earnestness. We trust that we will be provided with much-needed support to augment our national relief and rescue efforts.

The people of Pakistan greatly appreciate the launch of a $460-million Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan by the United Nations, for relief and immediate recovery of the affected people. We have also requested the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to assist the Government of Pakistan in carrying out a comprehensive damage needs assessment. We hope that it will be completed at the earliest possible date.

This disaster has hit us hard at a time, and in areas, where we are in the midst of fighting a war against extremists and terrorists. The people of Pakistan have stood by their brave security forces in the fight against terrorism. Our successes have been lauded by the international community, but these successes have come at a heavy price. More than 10,000 innocent civilians have fallen victim to terrorism, and more than 2,500 Pakistani soldiers have given their lives. Our material losses exceed $43 billion.

The gains that we have made against the terrorists are substantial. Yet we remain exposed. The peace and relative calm achieved as a result of the democratic Government's relentless efforts are still fragile and need to be consolidated. The massive upheaval caused by the floods and the economic losses suffered by millions of Pakistanis must be addressed urgently. If we fail, it could undermine the hard-won gains made by the Government in our difficult and painful war against terrorism. We cannot allow this catastrophe to become an opportunity for the terrorists.

Climate change, with all its severity and unpredictability, has become a reality for 170 million Pakistanis. The present situation in Pakistan reconfirms our extreme vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change. It also complicates the reconstruction and rehabilitation scenario in Pakistan. Nature has made a graphic endorsement to strengthen the case for a fair and equitable outcome from the ongoing United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations.

The sympathy and solidarity that I witness here today from all present is very reassuring. I wish to go back to Islamabad with a clear message for the people of Pakistan that they are not alone in this hour of trial and that the international community stands ready to support and assist them. We look forward to the international community's help in undertaking immediate relief measures and addressing the long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation needs of affected people and areas.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We shall now take action on draft resolution A/64/L.66, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/64/L.66?

Draft resolution A/64/L.66 was adopted (resolution 64/294).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to The Honourable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Ms. Clinton (United States of America): I listened with great interest and concern as Foreign Minister Qureshi detailed, with sombre eloquence and painful specificity, what the people and Government of Pakistan are facing today.

We are here, at the request of the Government of Pakistan, to help them respond to the worst natural disaster in their history. As Foreign Minister Qureshi pointed out, the flooding, which has affected more than

20 million Pakistanis — more than the population of New York State — is so enormous that it is almost hard to fathom. And the rain continues to fall, so the extent of the devastation is difficult to gauge.

This flooding has already affected more people than the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Haiti earthquake and the 2005 Pakistan earthquake combined. And, as we meet, we fear that a new wave of water may be about to sweep through areas that have already been devastated and reach those yet untouched.

My thoughts and prayers are with those who have lost loved ones and who have been displaced from their homes and left without food and water. The United States has taken, and continues to take, swift action to help, and on behalf of President Obama and the American people, I want to state our resolve to help Pakistan to meet the immediate crisis and then to recover from it.

I want the people of Pakistan to know that the United States will stand with you during this crisis. We will be with you as rivers rise and fall. We will be with you as you replant your fields and repair your roads. We will be with you as you meet the long-term challenges to build a stronger nation and a better future.

Under the direction of the Government of Pakistan and the National Disaster Management Authority, the United States has been working since the earliest days of the flooding to provide assistance to those it can reach and who need it most. Our civilian helicopters began assisting in relief efforts almost immediately. American military helicopters were redirected to rescue Pakistanis within hours of the Pakistani Government's request for help. Less than a day later, American military aircraft began delivering 400,000 hallal meals from storehouses in Dubai.

These efforts continue, and, to date, United States aircraft have carried more than 6,000 Pakistanis to safety and distributed more than a million pounds of relief supplies. We have also provided enough heavy-duty waterproof sheeting to construct temporary shelters for more than 100,000 people, and we have supplied the Pakistani Government with rescue boats, concrete-cutting saws, water filtration units and a dozen prefabricated bridges.

The initial response by the Pakistani Government and people, the United States and the international community has helped to alleviate suffering and save lives. But the combined efforts so far pale against the magnitude of the challenge.

It is difficult to overstate the scope of this catastrophe. And, unfortunately, we believe it is likely to get worse before it gets better. More than 800,000 homes have already been damaged or destroyed. Two million people have been forced to flee. Hundreds of bridges have been washed away, cutting off communities from relief supplies. As the Foreign Minister said, so much of this year's agricultural production has been wiped out, and farmers' submerged fields cannot be replanted this season. Many communities face shortages of clean drinking water and are vulnerable to cholera and other epidemics.

Experts predict that the flooding will not recede until mid-September, and if the monsoon rains continue, the devastation will spread to new areas, driving yet more people from their homes.

So we know we face a humanitarian disaster of monumental proportions, and it is creating economic and security problems. Here at the United Nations, we often speak of a desire to forge a more humane fellowship with humankind, and today we must match that aspiration with action.

Now, I realize that many countries, including my own, are facing tough economic conditions and very tight budgets. We have also endured an unrelenting stream of disasters this year, from the earthquake in Haiti to the wildfires in Russia. But we must answer the Pakistani request for help.

On 11 August, the United Nations issued a $459 million emergency flood response plan, and asked for the international community to respond. At the outset of this meeting today, existing pledges of assistance put us halfway towards that goal. That is a solid start, but we must close the gap.

With a new pledge that I am making today, of $60 million, the United States will be contributing more than $150 million towards emergency flood relief. Approximately $92 million of that total is in direct support of the United Nations relief plan. These funds are being use to provide critical supplies and support operations of the Pakistan National Disaster Management Authority and other organizations inside Pakistan. The United States is providing technical

assistance and mobilizing military and civilian resources as well.

Today I want to call on the American public and American corporations to support these relief efforts. Every dollar makes a difference, and Americans can send help to Pakistan by contributing to the Department of State's Pakistan Relief Fund. Please, go to www.state.gov/pakistanrelief, or make a $10 contribution through your mobile phone by texting the word "flood" to the number 27722.

Beyond our immediate response, the United States is committed to the long-term goal of working with Pakistan to improve conditions in the country. We demonstrated that commitment with a multi-year, $7.5 billion non-military assistance package, authorized by the Congress and agreed to by the President. We will now take some of those funds that were directed to initiatives that I announced just last month in Islamabad to support Pakistan in its reconstruction efforts.

In all of our work, we are seeking to strengthen Pakistan's democratic institutions. Our approach to relief and rebuilding will be based on the same foundation of partnership that we believe is important between our country and Pakistan. It will be up to Pakistan's elected leaders to head up this effort, and those elected officials, in turn, will be accountable to the citizens of Pakistan.

In my visits to Pakistan since becoming Secretary of State, I have spoken often about our desire to build an enduring partnership, and today we are once again reaffirming that commitment. I believe Pakistan will come through this crisis because of the strength, resilience and courage of the people. As we meet today during the holy month of Ramadan, we must all embrace a spirit of compassion and make it our mission to provide that relief.

A few days ago, an American helicopter rescued a pregnant women who was about to give birth. They were able to carry her to safety. Her home was under water. She was facing complications that could have claimed her life and the life of her child. Like all Pakistanis affected by the floods, this mother and baby still face many difficulties in the months and years ahead. But they will have an opportunity to rebuild their community and to contribute to a strong, secure, prosperous Pakistan. I believe in that baby's future.

Civilization has thrived on the banks of the Indus River for more than 5,000 years. It will continue, and if we come together now, we can meet this challenge and ensure that future generations in Pakistan have the opportunity to realize their own God-given potential.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Steven Vanackere, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

Mr. Vanackere (Belgium): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the European Union (EU) for all 27 Member States, our European institutions and our citizens, and also to bring a special message of support from the EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, who would have liked to represent the European Union here today and who is looking forward to the time when that will be possible.

I would like first of all to express our solidarity with and our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan following the tragic loss of life in the monsoon floods in the North and centre of the country. As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, our minds struggle to grasp the full dimension of this catastrophe, of this slow-motion tsunami. We share the grief of the affected families and express our heartfelt sympathy with those who have lost so much as a result of this unprecedented catastrophe.

The European Union welcomes the adoption today by the General Assembly of resolution 64/294, which encourages the international community to help Pakistan. I can assure the General Assembly that the European Union and all of its member States will contribute to the full implementation of the resolution.

The European Union is actively participating in the immediate global response to this humanitarian disaster and strongly supports the efforts of the United Nations and the Pakistani authorities as they provide vital assistance to those in need. I would like to stress one thing: We will continue to support this work as long as is needed. The international community is in this for the long term. The EU will work with Pakistan to mitigate the impact of this disaster on the daily lives and well-being of the Pakistani people.

The European Union and Pakistan share a long-lasting friendship. Last June, the second EU-Pakistan summit set the basis for a strategic dialogue, which includes the promotion of disaster risk reduction and

the effective provision of humanitarian assistance. Before this disaster, the European Union had already allocated more than €400 million in assistance to Pakistan for the period 2007-2010 for economic development and trade, as well as for governance and human rights.

Today, I can say that the European Union is considerably stepping up its support for Pakistan and for the Pakistani people. Since the beginning of the crisis, the EU and its member States have committed over €110 million, and I am pleased to announce that this amount will be increased by €30 million, which means that, in total, the European Union has committed more than €140 million, or the equivalent of $180 million. And let me underline that this humanitarian assistance is provided on the basis of the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and according to the needs on the ground.

In addition to the humanitarian funds, there are in-kind contributions from a large number of EU member States that need to be coordinated in order to maximize their impact on the ground. That is why the European Union has dispatched a full team of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism to Islamabad.

In the wake of this crisis, there is no room for complacency. The number of people who are in dire need of assistance is rising and will continue to do so as assessments continue and access improves. In order to provide the most adequate and comprehensive response, notably to address the food, sanitation and health needs, the European Union's institutions are working hand in hand.

The EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton, together with her colleagues at the European Commission in charge of humanitarian and development aid, is coordinating the EU assessment of both the short- and long-term implications of the crisis. The European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, Kristalina Georgieva, will be travelling to Pakistan in a few days to underpin EU efforts to assist the victims of this humanitarian disaster and support the coordination efforts of the United Nations and the Pakistani authorities.

As we all know, access remains a major challenge, and we are examining very carefully how all necessary assets can be deployed and mobilized as a matter of priority. But in a region still affected by a conflict that has triggered the displacement of millions of people since 2009, it is crucial that humanitarian aid be perceived as neutral and in line with international humanitarian law and on the basis of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

I would like to particularly stress that point today, the second World Humanitarian Day, which is dedicated to all relief workers, including those who have lost their lives while helping others.

As is the case within the European Union, coordination is also paramount for international actors. The national and provincial Pakistani authorities are clearly leading the response. At the same time, we would encourage all organizations to work with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to strengthen the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of the assistance. As we have seen in the case of Haiti, the consequences of a natural disaster can be overwhelming, and it is crucial that all actors cooperate to make the response as effective as possible.

Let me conclude with a few words on Pakistan's security and stability. The EU strongly encourages the international community to support Pakistan in a lasting manner and a durable way. Only if efforts are sustained can there be a long-term recovery. Pakistan will be particularly high on the agenda of the next informal meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Ministers at the beginning of September, and we are looking forward in particular to hosting the Friends of Democratic Pakistan ministerial meeting in October in Brussels, which will provide an opportunity to take stock of the relief provided and plan for rebuilding efforts.

As was said at the beginning of this meeting, humanity is calling. It is in times of adversity that we realize that true solidarity is not only about words and convictions; it is also about actions that make a difference in the lives of people. Let us now make sure that our solidarity is efficient, coordinated and sustained.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Temor Yakobashvili, Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia.

Mr. Yakobashvili (Georgia): To begin, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this plenary meeting to mobilize international efforts to alleviate the effects of the unprecedented humanitarian disaster unfolding in Pakistan.

I would like to convey the sympathy of the people of Georgia to the people of Pakistan, and to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the leadership and courage he has demonstrated at this critical moment. We applaud his prompt response and commend all nations that have demonstrated international solidarity with the people in the afflicted areas of Pakistan.

My country is well aware of the hardships caused by forced displacement. Coping with displacement on the scale seen here is an extremely difficult challenge for any Government and often requires concerted international efforts. The hardships faced by displaced persons should be alleviated as much as possible in these early days in order to prevent the deepening of the humanitarian crisis.

All displaced persons should be allowed to return to their homes and communities in safety and dignity, in accordance with international humanitarian law, and the international community should begin to support this process as soon as it can be safely executed.

As part of the wider international efforts, the Government of Georgia has decided to allocate $100,000 to the United Nations emergency flash appeal. We fully support the leadership of the United Nations in delivering humanitarian assistance to the people in need and would like to encourage the United Nations and its agencies to continue providing emergency aid. We would also encourage the United Nations to seek ways to meet the needs of those affected with a long-term perspective. It is our experience that displacement often lasts longer than anticipated, and this eventuality must be planned for with so many families in need.

On behalf of the Government of Georgia, I once again extend my deepest sympathy and condolences to the people who have suffered in this dreadful disaster.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Lene Espersen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Ms. Espersen (Denmark): At the outset, I should like to express my own behalf and on behalf of the Government and people of Denmark our sincere and heartfelt sympathy and solidarity with the hard-tried people of Pakistan, who have suffered such tragic loss of human life and livelihood following the devastating floods.

I wish, of course, to associate myself with the statements that have already been made by many of my colleagues, including by my Belgian colleague on behalf of the European Union presidency. I also wish to emphasize at the outset of my statement that the Government of Denmark fully agrees with the Secretary-General's intervention at the opening of this debate. The scale of the natural disaster that has struck Pakistan is so large and so devastating that it calls for nothing less than our full support for the people of Pakistan.

The message is clear. We must act now to help the millions of people trapped in this disaster and to avoid the potentially disastrous long-term impact on the livelihoods of Pakistan's people and the very fabric of Pakistani society.

First, we must pledge and deliver without delay a response with humanitarian assistance that matches the magnitude of this disaster. Secondly, we must move quickly and be ready when the waters recede in order to help the Pakistani people with the means to reconstruct their houses, their villages and their country. And thirdly, we must be ready to continue to support the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people in their long-term effort to build a democratic, stable and prosperous Pakistan free from conflict and poverty.

If we do not respond and if we do not help the people of Pakistan in these challenging times, we quite simply fail in our humanitarian obligation. But the humanitarian disaster could also very well further destabilize an already troubled region.

To effectively meet the challenges, we need more than ever a swift and coordinated international response. The United Nations has, in close coordination with the Pakistani Government, responded to the crisis and launched an initial emergency response plan. Like many others, Denmark responded immediately to this call for assistance, and I call upon all members of the international community to do the same. There is no time to waste. I should like

to commend the United Nations for its constructive cooperation with the Pakistani Government.

Whereas today's meeting is, of course, focused on the humanitarian situation in Pakistan, it is important to see this in context. Pakistan is also toiling with an armed conflict and almost daily horrifying terror attacks against innocent people, organizations and democratic institutions. I wish to express our continued support for the Government of Pakistan's determination to combat and stop the militants and its efforts to strengthen democracy and restore and build governance across the country, not least in such areas as Malakand, Swat and South Waziristan. We look to the Pakistani Government to provide the necessary leadership, courage and vision both in dealing with the immediate situation and urgent needs, and also when facing the more fundamental challenge of strengthening the social contract between the people of Pakistan and the democratically elected Government.

We must act now, and Denmark stands ready to do so. The Danish Government had, at the outset of the floods, already approved $11 million in immediate humanitarian aid and the dispatch of necessary technical experts to Pakistan. We are closely following the situation and constantly reviewing the need for further Danish support, whether in the form of further funding, logistical support or technical assistance.

Implementation is already under way and relief is being provided as we speak. Our engagement builds on long standing ties between Danish humanitarian organizations and local Pakistani organizations on the ground. In addition to our humanitarian response, the Danish Parliament only last week approved a further $22.5 million for medium- and long-term development assistance to Pakistan. The major part of this will be directed to early recovery and reconstruction activities through the Multi-Donor Trust Fund managed by the World Bank and through UNICEF.

There is an imminent risk that the natural disaster will lead to deeper poverty and marginalization in central and remote areas of Pakistan alike. It is therefore more crucial than ever that the international community and the Friends of Democratic Pakistan support the democratic Government in responding to the humanitarian crisis and fighting poverty and extremism. The international community must help Pakistan in this humanitarian crisis and provide support to the Government's long-term efforts to build a stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan. This and nothing less is what the situation demands.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Lawrence Cannon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Cannon (Canada): On behalf of the Canadian people, I should like to begin by offering my deepest condolences to all those who have been and are still so cruelly affected by the terrible natural disaster in Pakistan.

I thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this meeting.

The floods in Pakistan serve as a powerful reminder that every day millions of people worldwide require urgent humanitarian assistance. Clearly, the humanitarian needs resulting from the floods require an immediate and sustained international commitment. Canada will continue to be part of that response.

Canada has heard the call of the Secretary-General on the international community to provide immediate support and assistance to the people of Pakistan. In this regard, we fully support resolution 64/294 and its emphasis on supporting the Government of Pakistan as it seeks to meet the urgent needs of its people.

Canada has acted quickly to respond to the devastation caused by the floods. Immediately after the first wave of flooding, Canada announced a contribution of $2 million to meet urgent humanitarian needs.

(*spoke in French*)

Following the launch of the initial flood emergency response plan for Pakistan by the United Nations on 11 August, Canada announced that we would provide up to $33 million in response to the immediate needs of flood-affected Pakistanis. Of those funds, up to $25 million will be provided for humanitarian assistance to help meet such priority needs as access to food, water, sanitation, emergency medical care, shelter and essential household goods. The remaining $8 million will be used to acquire materials urgently needed by the country. That will include, for instance, the building of bridges to help the Government of Pakistan to restore access to communities cut off by the flooding and to help local

authorities to provide security to those affected by the disaster.

(*spoke in English*)

Canada has a long-standing and valued friendship with Pakistan. We were one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan, and have maintained a strong development partnership for over 40 years. Canadians have been shaken by the images of devastation and inspired by the resolve and determination of the people of Pakistan to overcome this tragedy.

Canada will continue to work with the Government of Pakistan, United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations on the ground to ensure that our collective assistance reaches the affected populations as quickly and as effectively as possible.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Egemen Bağiş, Minister for European Union Affairs and Chief Negotiator of Turkey.

Mr. Bağiş (Turkey): I would like to begin my statement by reading out a message to the General Assembly from His Excellency Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

> "Pakistan has experienced the most destructive natural disaster of its history. On behalf of my nation and my Government, I would like to express our deepest sorrow for the flood disaster that has shattered the lives of millions of Pakistanis. The Government and the nation of Pakistan have mobilized all their resources against this disaster, but more needs to be done. This is an emergency that needs an appropriate and immediate global response.
>
> "It is not only a necessity but also a humanitarian responsibility for all nations to act in unity and solidarity against this and other disasters. The United Nations is certainly the primary Organization to demonstrate this will. Today is the day to extend a swift, strong and a determined helping hand to Pakistan. Turkey and the Turkish people will remain in solidarity with Pakistan and we will do our best to heal the wounds of the Pakistani people."

In the spirit outlined in the message of Prime Minister Erdoğan, let me continue by expressing my heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of Pakistan for all those who lost their lives as a result of the floods. We wish strength to the bereaved families who lost loved ones.

This is one of the gravest disasters experienced by the international community. The scale of the destruction is unprecedented in its proportions. We highly appreciate the fact that the General Assembly has been convened for this special meeting to discuss this very urgent and important issue, which coincides meaningfully with World Humanitarian Day. I am confident that all of us are here to help mitigate this disaster.

I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his personal engagement and commitment to Pakistan. The United Nations has a crucial role in evaluating, assisting and coordinating the needs of the affected populations. We praise the leadership of the Secretary-General and applaud United Nations staff for their effective hard work on the ground. We also would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for his leadership.

The tragedy in Pakistan outlines a new challenge for all of us. In the face of such unprecedented natural disasters, it is vital to win the hearts and minds of the affected peoples. Natural disasters can generate social upheaval. Destabilized communities, displaced peoples and personal tragedies can turn into security problems. It is our common responsibility to heal the suffering as quickly as possible. It is encouraging to see that the international community is taking this threat very seriously. This high-level meeting sends the message that the people of Pakistan are not alone.

Our prompt response, political determination, global solidarity, organizational efficiency and logistical success should set an exemplary standard for similar emergencies and disasters in the future. The noble people of Pakistan should hear and feel that their well-being is being taken seriously by the international community and that we stand by them in this dire moment. I am certain that the relief operations will respect Pakistani sovereignty. Similarly, the pride of the Pakistani people should be duly respected during the relief operations.

The welfare and stability of brotherly Pakistan have always been of the utmost priority for Turkey. My nation has always been in full solidarity with the people of Pakistan. Our relationship is time-tested and

unique. Turkey immediately expressed its strong resolve at all levels to support Pakistan, including its readiness to provide humanitarian assistance. That has been unequivocally underlined by President Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan on every occasion.

To date, Turkey has sent four shipments of humanitarian assistance to Pakistan. One hundred and forty tons of humanitarian cargo, worth more than $2 million, have been transferred. The aid sent includes food rations, sheltering equipment and other aid material required by Pakistani authorities. Turkey has also transferred $10 million to Pakistani authorities for urgent needs. Furthermore, the Turkish armed forces will be sending two C-130 cargo planes carrying medical supplies.

I am proud to say that the Turkish Red Crescent and Turkish volunteer organizations and relief associations were among the first international groups to reach Pakistan. They have already distributed supplies in coordination with local authorities. We are also in the process of constructing two field hospitals, which we will staff with health care personnel. Those hospitals will be operational on Saturday.

Moreover, my Government has initiated an additional nationwide people-to-people donation campaign that will reflect the Turkish nation's warm feelings towards Pakistan during this holy month of Ramadan. The Turkish business world is also leading another campaign, with our chambers of commerce taking the lead by making a $1-million donation. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Presidency of Religious Affairs will also initiate similar campaigns in the very near future. Yesterday, the Organization of the Islamic Conference held an extraordinary session in Jeddah on this matter. Turkey participated actively in that meeting.

The international community — including the United Nations system, major development partners and the European Union — are facing yet another test against an enormous catastrophe. This plenary meeting, the ongoing global efforts and the responses voiced from this rostrum are all very encouraging. This should be a long-term and well-coordinated effort. As a first step, we need to have an effective outcome from this meeting, along with resolution 64/294, which we have just adopted.

As always, our bigger challenge will start after the floodwaters subside and once the emergency is over. We should remain vigilant and focused on Pakistan until normalcy returns to the displaced millions. Our attention span should not be limited to the evening news. The region, the continent and the world cannot afford another case of instability. Turkey will be at the forefront of this great humanitarian effort. As always, our message is peace at home and peace in the world.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Gunilla Carlsson, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden.

Ms. Carlsson (Sweden): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting, which offers an opportunity for the international community to reiterate its solidarity with the Pakistani people, along with an exchange of views on our future engagements. Sweden supports the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

On behalf of the Swedish Government and people, let me express our deepest sympathy with the people of Pakistan. The floods that have ravaged that country have caused unprecedented damage. So far, approximately 20 million have been affected. Along with loss of lives, there is a large number of displaced, and homes, livelihoods and infrastructure have endured extensive damage. Sweden is deeply concerned by the severe situation and wishes to extend its assurance of committed, strong support to Pakistan.

Sweden appreciates the good cooperation between the Pakistan Government and the United Nations, resulting in the response plan. The Swedish contribution to the flood response so far amounts to $11 million. I am pleased to announce that Sweden tomorrow will take a decision to commit another $8.2 million in support of the international efforts to help the Pakistani people in this crisis. We will ensure support, not least to the most vulnerable. That is why we also, on a regular and annual basis, provide core funding to major humanitarian organizations, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF. I assure the General Assembly that we will continue to assume our responsibility.

The situation in Pakistan, like the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti, demonstrates the importance of a well-coordinated international humanitarian system in order to ensure a quick and efficient response. In

recent years, we have put a great deal of effort into developing the humanitarian response system under the leadership of the United Nations. Sweden remains strongly committed to the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator in this regard. The efficient functioning of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) as a key enabler of an initial humanitarian response serves as an excellent example. Sweden is one of the two largest donors to CERF. We urge Member States to enhance their contributions to that mechanism.

Protracted armed conflicts, population growth, urbanization, increased food prices and climate change are sources of tremendous and increasingly complex challenges. Not least, severe natural catastrophes, as we have seen in Pakistan, require the development of a proactive approach alongside a reactive humanitarian response system. To that end, we need to focus even more of our efforts on preparedness and prevention. The international humanitarian community must be as efficient in providing mechanisms in this field as it is in developing the humanitarian response system. Efficient and viable solutions to ensure enhanced resilience at the country level must be found in collaboration with disaster-prone countries, drawing on their experience and knowledge. Close cooperation between national Governments, which hold the primary responsibility, and international efforts is a prerequisite for the construction of solid structures of disaster risk reduction at the country level. Building local preparedness and preventive efforts is crucial to limiting long-term vulnerability.

In this regard, Sweden supports the important work carried out by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in building disaster-resilient communities. Disaster risk reduction measures must be an integral part of our work in order to ensure a much-needed proactive approach. Let me take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. John Holmes, whose tireless efforts over the past three years have been key to addressing humanitarian needs globally.

As I return to Sweden shortly, our hearts, thoughts and efforts are with the Pakistani people.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to The Right Honourable Andrew Mitchell, Secretary of State for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Mitchell (United Kingdom): The British Government would like to express its deep sadness at the loss of life and destruction that has been caused by the floods in Pakistan and our concern for the continuing suffering of the Pakistani people.

I have come straight from Pakistan today and the area devastated by flooding. Yesterday, I visited the village and camp at Pir Sabak, where I saw scenes of total destruction of homes, livelihoods and all basic services, with watermarks over 12 feet above ground level on those walls left standing — an eloquent testament to the destructive force of the wall of water that has swept all before it over 1,200 miles of Pakistan, leaving utter devastation in its wake.

The British Government strongly supports the leadership of the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations in responding to this immense humanitarian crisis. We welcome this special meeting, which brings the international community together at a time of great need to focus on responding to the initial emergency response appeal in connection with the floods.

Britain wishes to offer the most forthright support to the Secretary-General and to respectfully suggest that the response of the international community so far has been woefully inadequate. The only acceptable outcome from today's special meeting is that the United Nations appeal should be fully funded, if not over-funded, by the time we conclude tonight. If this is not the case, the world will rightly draw the conclusion that the international community had failed in its duty.

The British Government has already made a significant commitment of nearly $50 million to the humanitarian response. This is helping to provide 1.5 million people with safe drinking water and sanitation supplies, and nutritional support for the vulnerable women and children so grievously affected. We have also accelerated a programme to provide new bridges to replace some of those washed away by the floods. The Royal Air Force is helping to transport vital equipment, including tents and shelter kits, and Britain is offering bridging expertise to help restore transport networks. We have brought forward our programme of $50 million of bridge repairs in Khyber Pakhtunkhawa.

Yesterday in Pakistan I announced additional support which will provide thousands of people with emergency shelter and will help humanitarian agencies to continue to address specific needs. Today I can announce that Britain will double its contribution to this emergency relief, to just under $100 million. We were amongst the first to rally to Pakistan's support, with the early deliver of shelter, food, medicines and clean water, and we are now identifying additional and specific interventions, working with the Government of Pakistan and our partners in the United Nations and civil society, for this further $50 million of aid and support.

As the Secretary-General has urged, it is now imperative that all wealthy countries step up and give vigorous support to Pakistan.

In addition to this, I would also like to recognize the significant, generous contribution that members of the British public have made through the British Disasters Emergency Committee appeal, raising nearly $25 million so far for the relief effort.

I can also report from my visit and meeting with Manuel Bessler, head of the Pakistan office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), that the cluster system appears to be working well. Britain underlines the need for strong coordination and would urge donors to support the considerable efforts of OCHA on the ground.

We should not lose sight of the immense longer-term effort that will be required to restore Pakistan's infrastructure and rebuild lives and livelihoods. Maintaining progress on economic growth and stabilization and on the vital programme of reform will also be critical — indeed, fundamental — to Pakistan's recovery.

Our resolution today draws attention to the growing effects of climate change, where expert advice suggests that the next 15 years will see an increase of 50 per cent in disaster emergencies. We know that in the first week of flooding in Pakistan more rain fell than in the whole of the previous 10 years.

I would like to conclude by recognizing, on World Humanitarian Day, the extraordinary work of humanitarian workers throughout the world, including those in Pakistan, and in particular those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Finally, no one can have witnessed such scenes of total destruction as I saw yesterday in Pir Sabaq. And now is the time for all of us to respond with commitment and determination to the plight of desperate people in Pakistan, and for the international community to shine a light of hope into the darkness and despair which we are seeing so widely spread across Pakistan today.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Peter Power, Minister of State for Overseas Development of Ireland.

Mr. Power (Ireland): I would like to begin by thanking the General Assembly and His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki for the initiative to convene this special plenary meeting of the Assembly in response to the terrible catastrophe that has befallen Pakistan. I would also like at the outset, on behalf of Ireland, to associate our country with the statement made by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. I welcome the additional funding provided by the European Union.

A disaster of this scope and magnitude requires a global response which must have the United Nations at its centre. The people of Pakistan need clean water, food, shelter and medicines, and it falls to us, the global community, to get these life saving supplies to Pakistan and distributed to the population as soon as possible.

This crisis has not occurred in an instant, devastating all before it, as was the case with the Asian tsunami and the Haiti earthquake. In some ways, the full measure of the devastation still remains unseen, completely covered by the flood waters. It is clear nonetheless that the scale of this crisis is of epic proportions. Over 1,000 people have lost their lives. Up to 20 million people have lost everything: their homes, livelihoods, livestock and possessions. It is our global responsibility now to ensure that the people whose lives have been devastated by this tragedy receive the aid they so desperately need as soon as possible. That must be our clear focus today.

The international humanitarian response needs to scale up to meet the enormity of this challenge. The rains and flooding continue and may persist into September, further complicating the relief effort. The damage to infrastructure as well as the sheer number of people affected makes it extraordinarily difficult to

deliver the comprehensive response that is required. But the global community must meet this challenge.

The Government of Pakistan is facing the enormous responsibility of leading the response to this disaster. We are here today to clearly demonstrate global solidarity with the Pakistani people in this humanitarian effort. I would emphasize, however, the vital role the United Nations must play in coordinating the global response to ensure that appropriate assistance is provided to all those in need, as soon as possible.

Coordination and cooperation provide us with the best strategy for an effective humanitarian response. Anything less will result in further loss of life. All of our experience from previous disasters points to the vital importance of delivering aid in a coordinated manner. The importance of putting proper coordination structures in place was a key lesson from the response to the Haiti earthquake earlier this year.

We must also remain aware of the enormous challenges faced by individual people caught up in this crisis. People are understandably desperate to provide for their families, to help feed their children and to rescue those still trapped by the rising flood waters. It is our job to help them.

Today is World Humanitarian Day, and I would appeal to all those responding to continue to observe best international humanitarian principles to ensure that those in need receive the most timely and appropriate assistance. Adherence to those principles is the best way to ensure that aid reaches those most in need.

As I said, this is a moment of global solidarity. We meet in difficult times for all our countries, facing the enormous challenges arising from the international financial crisis. However, what we are witnessing in Pakistan is a crisis threatening the very survival of millions of people. This is a global emergency, and we need a global response.

The Irish Government and the Irish public have already contributed extremely generously to the humanitarian response, and the funds continue to arrive in support of Irish non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and aid agencies. The Irish Government has prioritized in recent years the pre-positioning of emergency assistance to enable the fastest possible release of humanitarian assistance by our partners in the event of a sudden onset emergency such as the floods in Pakistan. This strategy has been implemented by pre-positioning funding with a number of key Irish NGOs and through annual contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund. It has provided partners with the necessary flexibility and early resource mobilization which is vital for their initial response.

In addition, since 2007 Ireland has pre-positioned emergency non-food items through a partnership with the World Food Programme. These supplies have proven invaluable in providing early and speedy humanitarian assistance. Earlier this week, a consignment of tents from Irish Aid's stores arrived in Islamabad for distribution through the International Organization for Migration. Ireland is also working with our standby partners to support their operations through the provision of personnel from our Rapid Response Corps.

Ireland has provided further resources to a number of key responding partners in this emergency. We have provided funding support to some of our partner NGOs such as Concern and Trócaire. Ireland also prioritizes the coordination role of the United Nations, and we have provided targeted funds to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for its response. Here, I would like to commend Mr. John Holmes and all of his colleagues in OCHA for their excellent work to date.

I am pleased to be able to announce today a doubling of humanitarian assistance from the Government of Ireland to €2 million in total, but I emphasize that this is our initial humanitarian response for the relief phase. Further funding will be provided once a comprehensive post-disaster needs assessment has been carried out. We believe that this increase is warranted by the evolving situation on the ground.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This year started with the devastating earthquake in Haiti. We continue to work closely with our partners in that country to ensure that the recovery is as effective and comprehensive as possible. Humanitarian disasters do not respect annual calendars, and we are now faced with a further enormous challenge in Pakistan. I would appeal to the United Nations and to all our partner Governments represented here today to keep up the momentum on the humanitarian response to this disaster.

I will conclude by saying that it is particularly appropriate that this meeting is taking place on World Humanitarian Day. We now have an opportunity to save lives and relieve human suffering, which is, after all, the overarching objective of any humanitarian response. Assisting and facilitating the humanitarian response in Pakistan must be a key priority for us all. As a global community, we will be measured by how we respond to the enormous needs of the Pakistani people in this time of unprecedented crisis.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Werner Hoyer, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany.

Mr. Hoyer (Germany): First of all, let me thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this special Assembly meeting. His initiative to summon this important gathering is timely and greatly appreciated.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement just delivered by Belgian Foreign Minister Vanackere in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Union.

We listened carefully to the Secretary-General's dramatic report on the situation. Personally, I was deeply moved by his account of the plight of the Pakistani people.

Today, Pakistan is facing an unprecedented natural disaster, which has caused tragic loss of life, enormous damage and tremendous suffering. I would like to join those speakers who have expressed their sincere condolences to the Pakistani people. In Germany, our thoughts are with the many victims and their families — with those who have lost everything in this disaster and now struggle to recover.

After having received the dramatic reports from Pakistan and in response to the initial flood emergency response plan of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the German Government immediately started its humanitarian assistance operations.

Today, I can announce that we have just decided to further increase our humanitarian aid to $32 million. This is on top of the German contributions of roughly $18 million to the European Union humanitarian funds, and to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. The German Government's humanitarian aid therefore currently stands well above $50 million. I am particularly grateful to the citizens of my country for their more than 30 million contributions and private donations, and I call upon my compatriots to continue this necessary and valuable effort.

The bilateral funds go to United Nations humanitarian organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, non-governmental relief organizations and German implementing agencies. They serve to distribute food and drinking water and to provide medical care and shelter to the people in need. Numerous humanitarian aid organizations in the affected areas are already working hard to alleviate the suffering of those affected by the flood.

We thank the Secretary-General for his leadership and also express our support for the important work of his Special Envoy, Jean-Maurice Ripert.

In a disaster of such dimensions, the coordination of aid efforts is also of paramount importance. We commend United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator Sir John Holmes and OCHA for their tireless and successful efforts to coordinate the international relief reaching Pakistan.

As my Irish colleague just mentioned, today, 19 August, is World Humanitarian Day. It was created to highlight the role of the many dedicated humanitarian workers who, under difficult and sometimes very dangerous circumstances, provide life-saving aid to the victims of humanitarian disasters. Therefore, allow me to express our gratitude to the Pakistani and international aid workers in the affected areas who relentlessly work for the suffering population. Their contribution to mitigating the consequences of this crisis is invaluable. They deserve our greatest respect.

So far, our assistance has been focused on the immediate relief and early recovery period. But we must not forget that Pakistan will be confronted with far bigger challenges when the full scale of destruction becomes visible. Damaged infrastructure and destroyed crops and livestock will have massive consequences for the livelihoods of the people and the already strained economy of the country. We all agree that the international community must stand by Pakistan, including after the waters have receded and the television cameras have been cut off.

Germany will support Pakistan in meeting the immediate needs caused by the floods, and we will sustain our support through our long-term development cooperation to overcome the structural challenges the nation faces.

We have built a strong partnership in the framework of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan to jointly ensure a strong and stable Pakistan. Germany will continue to work with the Pakistani Government in this framework.

We believe that Pakistan plays a vital role in its region. A stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan is paramount for peace in South Asia and far beyond. In the face of this tragedy, our friendship and support is even more important. I can assure the General Assembly that Germany will continue to stand by Pakistan in this challenging time and offer its full assistance.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Osamu Fujimura, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Fujimura (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I offer sincere prayers for the victims of the devastating floods and express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families. I also extend Japan's sympathies to all those affected by the disaster. We express our profound respect for the relief efforts undertaken by the Government of Pakistan, other Member States, the United Nations and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations. We also welcome the decision of the United Nations, at the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and General Assembly President Treki, to convene this meeting.

The recent flooding in Pakistan has caused serious damage, with significant loss of life and property, and has had a grave impact on the entire Pakistani economy and society. In particular, there remain substantial need for emergency humanitarian assistance aimed at addressing the deteriorating hygiene situation and the shortages of water and food, among other problems. In addition, there is an urgent need to rebuild basic infrastructure, including roads, bridges and communications and agricultural infrastructure destroyed in the disaster, as well as to meet basic human needs through improvements in the health and sanitary situation.

The Government of Pakistan and the international community should therefore make a concerted effort to focus on emergency assistance and to address the challenges of rehabilitation and reconstruction with a view to stemming the vicious cycle of disaster and poverty. Upon request from the Government of Pakistan and the initial flood emergency response plan for Pakistan announced by the United Nations on 11 August, Japan has swiftly implemented its pledge of humanitarian assistance totalling approximately $14.4 million for those affected by the disaster. Japan's assistance consists of $13 million in emergency grant aid, $200,000 for emergency relief goods and $1.2 million for emergency relief by Japanese non-governmental organizations through the Japanese platform. Japan will continue to actively implement emergency humanitarian assistance based on the local needs of Pakistan in order to promptly provide support for those affected.

In consideration of the great need for transportation by helicopter of relief goods to the afflicted people, the Government of Japan began making the necessary preparations to dispatch helicopters to Pakistan on 19 August. Moreover, in order to alleviate the vulnerabilities of the poor, Japan stands ready to support, to the greatest extent possible, Pakistan's efforts through the phase of emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction in a seamless manner and to consider the utilization of expertise and technology derived from Japan's own past experiences with disaster. In this connection, Japan has decided to participate in the damage needs assessment to be conducted by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

The current disaster is one of the gravest natural disasters experienced by Pakistan since its establishment. It may well be said that this is a time in which Pakistan is being put to the test. Japan has been a solid partner of Pakistan since its foundation and the people of Japan have always stood by the people of Pakistan in times of difficulty. In April last year, Japan hosted the Pakistan donor conference, as well as the Friends of Democratic Pakistan ministerial meeting in Tokyo to support our friend. Japan continues to make every effort, in cooperation with the international community, to support the Government of Pakistan towards restoring stability and reconstructing the affected areas. Japan looks forward to the early rehabilitation and reconstruction of Pakistan under the

robust ownership of its Government and people. It is my sincere hope that those who have suffered losses in the disaster will overcome the current difficulties and regain their livelihoods through reconstruction.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Reem Ibrahim Redha Al Hashimi, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates.

Ms. Al Hashimi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the President for having organized this meeting. Today, we are talking about what we can expect from the General Assembly at moments such as this. I would like to convey our sincere condolences to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan following the terrible material and human loss that his country has suffered following the floods. We reaffirm our solidarity with the people and Government of Pakistan and our desire to continue to provide assistance to save the victims and restore their normal living conditions as soon as possible.

The United Arab Emirates has long-standing links with Pakistan, including our provision of development assistance, directly or indirectly through various international organizations, to Pakistan since 1975. The United Arab Emirates has stood shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan whenever it has had to cope with natural disasters, including the events in the Swat valley. Following the 2005 earthquake, we provided emergency aid, chartered aircraft to deliver medicine and supplies to affected regions. We have done the same since the beginning of the current disaster. We will continue to provide direct assistance in coordination with the competent authorities in Pakistan.

The United Arab Emirates contributions to international efforts include medical supplies, tents, blankets and food. Three helicopters have been chartered to transport victims and casualties. Over and above the immediate assistance provided, we will undertake to allocate $5 million to the United Nations fund to assist victims. We understand the great magnitude of the devastation to the country. Henceforth, international assistance must be commensurate with the needs of rebuilding infrastructure to ensure that the situation is reversed. We thank the Secretary-General for his role in coordinating efforts.

The floods in Pakistan once again sound the alarm bell regarding climate change. We need to take this issue seriously. We need to take tangible measures in order to limit its impact. This will require strengthening capacity and development and measures at the international and local levels. The different aspects of climate change, such as changes in temperatures, need to be borne in mind. We do not want such a thing to happen again.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Ingrid Fiskaa, State Secretary in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Norway.

Ms. Fiskaa (Norway): Let me join other speakers in expressing my profound sympathies to the people and Government of Pakistan for the human suffering and tragic loss of life caused by this devastating flood. Norway enjoys close people-to-people relations with Pakistan. Many Norwegians whose roots are in Pakistan are now in distress over affected relatives.

The flooding in Pakistan is not only an unprecedented situation and one of the greatest disasters witnessed in recent years; it is more than anything a story of millions of personal tragedies. It is the story of the father who stayed behind to save the family's livelihood and who is worried about its well-being.

The first wave of floodwater caused hardship to millions of people. Infrastructure and livelihoods have been hit, with devastating long-term effects. The second wave of suffering, bringing waterborne diseases, could be even more deadly. We must therefore act now and provide immediate emergency relief to minimize the deadly impact of this second wave while we can.

We meet here today at the United Nations to support the people of Pakistan and to help the Government of Pakistan to coordinate and provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to its affected population, with the assistance of the United Nations. Our united message to the flood victims must be that we will help to save their lives, we will assist them through their suffering now, and we will continue to support them through the recovery phase. I appeal to all donors to ensure that their assistance and funding are made available immediately.

The international community and humanitarian actors should align their support with the priorities of the Pakistani Government and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The initial flood

emergency response plan for Pakistan is an important platform to this end, and we expect it to result in a better response. Good humanitarian coordination means ensuring that help is directed where the needs are greatest and is provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality.

The One United Nations programme in Pakistan is a close partner of the Pakistani Government, and we welcome the Government's constructive decision to allow the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service to deploy assets in the country. We encourage the inclusion of the education cluster in the forthcoming update of the response plan.

Once again, women, children and the elderly have been the hardest hit by natural disaster. We urge the Pakistani Government and all humanitarian actors on the ground to pay special attention to the different needs of women, girls, men and boys in this dire situation.

Norway has already given 115 million Norwegian kroner — about $19 million — including in Central Emergency Response Fund contributions, in humanitarian assistance to the flood victims. Our funds have been channelled through the response plan to organizations that are close to the flood victims and have long experience in operating in Pakistan. Norway's assistance is already available to the recipient organizations. To support national ownership and leadership, we have also earmarked part of our contribution for the National Disaster Management Authority in Pakistan.

What is unfolding in Pakistan is a reminder that we may be facing a world where disasters made worse by climate change will drive millions of people from their homes, threaten lives and destroy ecosystems. Let this be a reminder that triggers our immediate response as well as our concern in the long term.

Behind every loss of life stands a grieving family. Let our efforts be intensified by the plea of the parents who have lost their livelihoods and now risk losing what is dearest to them — their children. Let this meeting be a call for concerted action — a call on us to act immediately and resolutely in line with our universal humanitarian beliefs — to save lives, alleviate suffering and ensure the human dignity of the people of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Joke Brandt, Director-General for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Ms. Brandt (Netherlands): The Netherlands would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union. Therefore, I will keep my statement short by focusing on three points.

First, I would like to thank the President for convening this important meeting. As others have already pointed out, there is no room for complacency. The gravity of the humanitarian crisis and the continued threat of flooding in many areas require an urgent response and a continued strong engagement on the part of us all.

The Netherlands is no stranger to the havoc that water can wreak. We strongly sympathize with the Pakistani people and the affected families who have suffered the loss of loved ones or watched their homes and livelihoods being washed away. The impact of this disaster is unprecedented and almost beyond imagination. The Netherlands, like others, stands ready to help a friend in such dire need.

Secondly, the Netherlands and Pakistan maintain a long-standing relationship, which is also reflected in a structural development partnership. In response to this disaster, the Netherlands — besides making substantial contributions through the European Union and the Central Emergency Response Fund — has contributed €3 million for emergency aid: €1 million channelled through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and €2 million to the United Nations initial floods emergency response plan.

I am pleased to be able to announce that the Netherlands will contribute another €3.6 million to the response plan to be channelled through the World Food Programme and UNICEF, which will bring the total Dutch contribution to the United Nations appeal to €5.6 million and our total contribution to the response to the floods to €6.6 million, or almost $9 million.

Additionally, a consortium of Dutch non-governmental organizations is raising funds among the general public to enable its members to express their solidarity with the people of Pakistan in these difficult times. So far, €2.5 million have been contributed by the Dutch public.

Finally, a disaster of this magnitude requires coordination and cooperation among all organizations and institutions involved. The Netherlands calls upon all stakeholders to work with the Government of Pakistan in a concerted effort to ensure the maximum effectiveness of the emergency operations. As we have seen, the coordinating role of the United Nations, and in particular the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, are crucial to an effective response.

This afternoon, we have again been made aware of the daunting challenges ahead of us. Now, we must also show the resolve and commitment needed to ensure that assistance reaches the people of Pakistan as quickly and effectively as possible.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Attilio Massimo Iannucci, Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy.

Mr. Iannucci (Italy): In taking the floor at this plenary meeting of the General Assembly, Italy fully endorses the statement delivered by His Excellency Mr. Steven Vanackere, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, on behalf of the European Union. In our national capacity, both Foreign Minister Frattini and I wish to express to His Excellency Minister Qureshi our deepest condolences for the victims of the immense catastrophe that has struck Pakistan and the solidarity of the Italian people with the people of Pakistan in this moment of great difficulty.

Italy acted promptly to provide immediate assistance to the victims of the flooding in the country. An emergency flight sponsored by Italian Cooperation arrived in Islamabad on 7 August with a 30-ton cargo of basic goods with a total value €330,000, including medicine, generators and water purification units. These items were immediately distributed to the people of Pakistan with the assistance of the National Disaster Management Authority. Italy immediately made a €1-million contribution — €400,000 to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and €600,000 to the World Food Programme — to support humanitarian assistance activities, such as the distribution of basic goods and food and the provision of medical care.

We are in the process of allocating €1 million — €600,000 to UNICEF and €400,000 to the World Health Organization — to support activities in the areas of health and sanitation, as provided for in the framework of the initial flood emergency response plan for Pakistan. Italy is also preparing a €1.5-million bilateral initiative. The local authorities will be consulted to ensure that the initiative fully meets the needs of the affected communities.

In general, Italy is examining its cooperation programme in Pakistan, together with the Islamabad authorities, to ensure that it is compatible with the new priorities of rehabilitating the social and economic fabric of the country in the wake of the tragic floods. This programme consists of initiatives — some already operational, others to be launched shortly — focused largely on the development of areas devastated by the floods that had already been impacted by the democratic Government of Pakistan's fight against terrorist elements in the country.

In fact, we need to keep in mind the Pakistani Government's fight against the Taliban in the areas on the border with Afghanistan, which has thus far had a positive effect on the Afghan theatre and the consolidation of democracy in Pakistan. A massive physical and social reconstruction is required in the areas affected by the conflict and by the tragedy of internal displacement, with the ultimate goal of promoting economic development in rural and depressed areas of the country in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty that foments extremism and provides fresh recruits to the armed militancy.

Given the commitment of Islamabad's democratic Government, Italy's action is grounded in the awareness that prompt and effective assistance to Pakistan should address clear and precise political, strategic and humanitarian needs in areas affected by widespread instability and where the interests of the main international stakeholders do not always converge. Therefore, as early as the donors conference for Pakistan held in Tokyo on 17 April 2009, Italy announced €62 million in new development plans for priority sectors, including €2 million for agriculture, €40 million for rural development and microcredit, and €20 million for training, with a geographical concentration on the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. I am pleased that the Pakistani authorities have recently taken the action needed to finalize the related intergovernmental agreement on the last two programmes.

We are also finalizing an €80-million debt-to-project swap that will be used for development and reconstruction projects. In this connection, the Joint Committee on Management has just approved a new series of projects designed by authorities of the Pakistani provinces and Italian partners that address the needs and priorities that have arisen in the wake of the floods.

In terms of projects targeting the post-emergency phase, Italy has already announced that it will allocate €4 million to the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund towards the reconstruction and development of the North-West Frontier area through the implementation of projects to be identified by the damage needs assessment as soon as the rains have stopped.

Our actions and assistance programmes are elements of the broader political and strategic support provided by Italy to the democratic Government of Pakistan at the bilateral level and as a European Union member. President Zardari's visit to Rome a year ago and his meetings with President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano, Prime Minister Berlusconi and Foreign Minister Frattini allowed my country to consolidate this support at the highest levels. It was also an occasion for reinvigorating our economic and trade relations in fields that are essential to Pakistan's economic development, such as agro-industry, marble, gemstones, energy and infrastructure.

As the Foreign Minister's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, I can assure the Assembly that Italy is committed, within both the group of special representatives and the Friends of Democratic Pakistan, to communicating the urgent need for increased assistance to Pakistan. This is a commitment that Italy will reiterate in Brussels on 14 and 15 October at the ministerial meeting of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan.

In conclusion, here too, in addressing a catastrophe that the United Nations has called unprecedented, Italy wishes to convey to the international community the message that it is urgent and necessary to provide concrete assistance to the Government of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Al-Saadi (Yemen): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Group, to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened this timely meeting to consider the humanitarian situation resulting from the floods in Pakistan. Our thanks also go to the Secretary-General and United Nations organizations for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people affected by the floods.

The Group of 77 and China express their deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of Pakistan for the loss of many precious lives and the massive destruction of property and infrastructure caused by the most devastating floods in the history of the country, which have shocked us all.

The Group of 77 and China take this opportunity to convey our assurance of continued support to Pakistan, where millions have been affected by this natural calamity. We also thank the Foreign Minister of Pakistan for his statement on the humanitarian situation in Pakistan in the wake of the floods and for elucidating the need for relief and rehabilitation.

The alarming frequency and ferocity of natural disasters is a major concern faced by the world, and in the past few years many countries have been severely impacted by these disasters. The implications of such disasters in developing countries are particularly immense, due mainly to the lack of resources, their long-lasting consequences on affected populations, and their adverse impact on the environment and livelihoods of millions of people.

We acknowledge the efforts being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan for the rescue and relief of the affected populations, in cooperation with the international community. We emphasize that the needs of those affected by the disaster are urgent and should receive substantial immediate, medium- and long-term assistance from the international community. The Group of 77 and China urge the international community to continue to help Pakistan to cope with the challenges it faces in the wake of these unprecedented floods.

The Group of 77 and China reiterate their commitment and full support for the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 as the framework for the provision of United Nations humanitarian assistance. These

principles — neutrality, humanity and impartiality — should remain the basis of all responses to humanitarian emergencies and guide the efficiency and coordination of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations and all relevant organizations.

We would like to thank the President of the Assembly for convening this meeting on World Humanitarian Day, which was designated by the General Assembly to contribute to increasing public awareness about humanitarian assistance activities worldwide and the importance of international cooperation in this regard, as well as to honour all humanitarian and United Nations and associated personnel who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause and those who have lost their lives in the course of their duties.

In conclusion, we hope and pray that the people of Pakistan, with the help of the international community, will be able to cope with this massive disaster.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Tag-Eldin (Egypt): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

At the outset, I would like to extend our sincerest and most heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Pakistan for their losses and the suffering they have endured during the horrific disaster that has plagued the country over the past weeks.

The Non-Aligned Movement expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude for the convening of this important meeting at this timely juncture to consider the current humanitarian situation resulting from the continuous monsoon floods in Pakistan. Moreover, the Movement commends the rapid response of the Secretary-General and the United Nations in support of the relief efforts in the immediate aftermath of the calamity.

Pakistan is currently witnessing one of the gravest natural disasters in its recent history. The current monsoon rains have resulted in floods of unprecedented magnitude that, according to preliminary assessments, have destroyed almost 900,000 homes, hundreds of roads, many bridges, educational and health facilities, electricity transmission lines and Government buildings, affecting nearly 20 million persons and resulting in the loss of crops vital to domestic food consumption and export.

Unfortunately, this disastrous situation could worsen, as it is feared that further heavy monsoon rains will continue, thus increasing the risk of floods in many areas of Pakistan and making the danger of the outbreak of waterborne and communicable diseases even more imminent. The Non-Aligned Movement is ready to join hands with the international community in preparing for this disaster of still unforeseen consequences by taking concerted and expeditious action to avert the expected aggravation of the current situation in Pakistan.

NAM acknowledges the tremendous efforts exerted by the Government of Pakistan to mobilize all available resources to address this serious situation. We must recognize the gravity of the calamity, which has inflicted losses of billions of dollars on the Pakistani economy through the destruction of infrastructure and millions of acres of farmland. Over 3.2 million hectares of standing crops, representing 16 per cent of the total cultivable area, have so far been damaged.

Furthermore, we must be aware not only of the current consequences of the disaster, but also of its repercussions on the livelihood of the Pakistani population in the months to come, in particular in the agricultural sector, where the loss of stored planting seeds and the destruction of standing crops and irrigation systems are likely to lead to severe food shortages in the near future.

As the situation worsens, the resolve of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement grows stronger. Many members of the Movement have, during the past few weeks, committed themselves to contributing to the international assistance efforts and to supporting the Pakistani Government's attempts to alleviate the suffering of millions of persons and to deal with the enormity of this challenge. In this regard, two Egyptian planes have already arrived in Islamabad, carrying hundreds of tons of medicine, medical supplies and equipment, tents and food aid.

Today, the Movement reaffirms the readiness of its members to intensify their efforts and increase their assistance to the Government of Pakistan through bilateral, regional and multilateral emergency relief and development frameworks.

At this juncture, the international community has to augment its efforts not only to address the short-term relief measures, but also to take into consideration the need for the long-term rehabilitation of the affected population and the reconstruction of infrastructure in the affected areas. Now is the time to deliver on the commitments the international community has made to provide predictable emergency relief assistance and aid for the short and long term, to overcome the effects of this disaster.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), on whose behalf I am speaking, is deeply grieved by the ongoing, unprecedented floods in Pakistan, which have taken hundreds of precious lives and had a severe impact on the lives of one in ten Pakistanis.

We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for having convened this timely plenary meeting to consider the humanitarian situation resulting from the floods in Pakistan. No one could remain indifferent in the face of all that was said by the Secretary-General at his briefing following his visit to Pakistan a few days ago with the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. John Holmes. We thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and look forward to his leadership role in guiding the United Nations system's response to the short- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of Pakistan. We would also like to thank Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, for his briefing on the situation on the ground in his country and on the challenges that Pakistan is facing now and could face in the short, medium and long term.

Resolution 64/294 expresses the international community's commitment to and solidarity with Pakistan in the wake of this unprecedented natural disaster.

As we meet here, heavy monsoon rains continue to lash parts of Pakistan, and fresh flooding in many areas has been reported. Millions of people are being rescued and evacuated from cities, towns and rural areas. While there are initial estimates of the destruction, it will be weeks before the world knows the real cost of the disaster.

The OIC extends its deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan, and to the families of the victims of this unfolding disaster. We also share the pain and hardship being faced by millions of our brothers and sisters who have been rendered homeless by this natural calamity and are living in very difficult circumstances, in the midst of Ramadan. We urge Member States to make generous contributions towards the speedy relief and rehabilitation of those brothers and sisters who await our help in this holy month of Ramadan, a time which teaches us to feel and share the pain of others.

The Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference, His Excellency Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, has urged States members of the OIC and their citizens, philanthropists, civil society organizations and the international community at large to contribute towards humanitarian assistance for the victims of these devastating floods in Pakistan. However, we are acutely aware that recovery from disasters of this scale and magnitude takes years and requires substantial, long-term commitment and support from the international community.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference appreciates and acknowledges the efforts being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan for the rescue and relief of the affected populations under extremely difficult and challenging circumstances, in cooperation with the international community. We once again urge the international community to redouble its efforts to help the victims of this enormous devastation. The OIC stands with the people and Government of Pakistan in this unprecedented time. We stand ready to extend help in every possible manner.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ghana.

Mr. Christian (Ghana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. Permit me at the outset to express its thanks to the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting.

We also express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his timely visit to Pakistan and for mobilizing international donor support to assist the

several million people who are in desperate need of food, clothing, shelter and medicine.

What has occurred in Pakistan is a disaster of stupendous proportions, and the African Group expresses its sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan. We have been shocked by the loss of life and the immense damage to infrastructure and property and to crops and livestock, and by the consequent humanitarian crisis.

The international response to the humanitarian crisis in Pakistan is at a critical juncture. As the scope of the disaster unfolds, with the threat of more rain and the potential spread of disease and illness, there is an urgent need for more intensified efforts to alleviate the sad plight of the millions of people affected by this disaster, some of whom are desperate and in dire need of aid. Resources, therefore, are quickly needed.

The cry of distress is a call to rescue, and the African Group pledges its support to the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan; it commend the Secretary-General and the United Nations for the great efforts made in marshalling funds for Pakistan. We also express our appreciation to the Member States who have already provided emergency relief and assistance.

The African Group endorses resolution 64/294, adopted by the Assembly this afternoon, and urges Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector, in the spirit of international solidarity and cooperation, to extend assistance to enable the Government and the people of Pakistan to overcome this tragedy.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia.

Mr. Sea (Cambodia): I have the honour and the great privilege to speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States. At the outset, I would like to express our deep gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening today's plenary meeting for timely consideration of the humanitarian situation resulting from the floods in Pakistan.

Above all, allow me once more to convey, on behalf of all members of the Asian Group, our profound condolences to the Pakistani people and to the bereaved families of the victims of this catastrophe.

Since today, 19 August, is also World Humanitarian Day, declared by the Assembly two years ago, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the brave humanitarian workers who devote their time and energy to the rescue of victims of catastrophes in Pakistan and in other places around the world.

The destructive force of the monsoon rains in Pakistan that began at the end of July has ravaged the country with massive floods. A natural disaster of great magnitude has crippled nearly one fourth of the country, where thousands of towns and villages have simply been washed away. Roads, bridges, buildings, crops and millions of livelihoods have been lost. An initial assessment of the scale of the damage indicates that about 20 million people have been affected by this disaster and that more than 3 million children are at terrible risk of contracting deadly diseases.

Ever since the disaster struck Pakistan, the United Nations has been on the front lines with the countries of the region, which have been very actively engaged in the process. The professionalism and swiftness with which the Organization, especially the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, reacted to this tremendous disaster deserve much praise and admiration. We see that the United Nations and the international community are moving as fast as they can to provide emergency relief and assistance on ground.

The visit of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to Pakistan last week was a reassuring gesture to the Pakistani people at this very difficult time. His visit gave the people great comfort at this time of grief and distress.

On behalf of all ASEAN member States, I wish to extend my deep appreciation to the Secretary-General and his able team, headed by Mr. John Holmes, for the leadership they are providing in response to the tragedy. We welcome the responses of the international community, Governments and non-governmental organizations in dealing with a catastrophe of this nature. All of us responded out of a profound sense of common humanity. At the head of all is our world Organization, which has been helping millions of people affected and coordinating relief assistance in the country effectively.

We have also taken into account the fact that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has launched an initial appeal for $460 million, which is most urgently required to mitigate the adverse

impacts of the floods and for adequate reconstruction needs in Pakistan. While those relief efforts have restored some measure of normalcy to some affected communities by ensuring the availability of various public services, such as clean water and basic health care, it is very important to note that such valuable support must be maintained during the long rehabilitation and reconstruction process.

In conclusion, I would like to express once again, on behalf of the Group of Asian States, our deepest condolences to the victims of the disaster and to fully share our sympathy and solidarity with the people and Government of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Suriname.

Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to express our profound sympathy to the Government and people of Pakistan on the destruction, devastation, and loss of lives and livelihoods caused by the ongoing and unprecedented floods in Pakistan.

CARICOM would like to associate itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement.

We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting to address the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Pakistan and ways for the international community to increase its relief assistance to millions of people so heavily affected by this disaster and in urgent need of life-saving assistance.

As a group of States constantly embattled by natural disasters, Caribbean countries are acutely aware of the enormous suffering caused by a disaster of such magnitude, having witnessed earlier this year one of the worst natural disasters in the history of our sister country Haiti. Given the size of our countries, it felt as if the entire Caribbean region had been hit by the massive earthquake.

As the numbers of those affected by the floods in Pakistan are already alarming and expected to rise, there is need for the international community to commit itself urgently to providing continued assistance to the Pakistani people while action is taken to assess the total destruction. In this regard, it is encouraging to note that the generosity of donors is being demonstrated through increased funding. The rapid involvement of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in regard to this disaster strikes a positive note and should be further supported. It is testimony to the very ideals we all hold dear that, in times of enormous suffering, we will come to aid those in their darkest hour of need.

CARICOM has taken note of the briefings by the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and thanks the Secretary-General for his leadership, his swift action and for his previous statement, which should guide the actions of the international community in its support to the Pakistani people. In Islamabad on 15 August, the Secretary-General said: "These unprecedented floods demand unprecedented assistance. The flood waves must be matched with waves of global support".

We also thank the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Makhdoom Shah Qureshi, for sharing with us in this Assembly the dire situation currently on the ground in his country and the actions taken by his Government. CARICOM countries would like to request him to convey to the Government and people of Pakistan the solidarity of the Governments and peoples of the Caribbean region.

In closing, CARICOM, as a society of small nations with limited means at its disposal, stands ready to extend help in all ways within its possibilities and calls upon the international community to stand in unity with the Pakistani people, especially after the floods have ceased to be headlines in the international media but when destroyed livelihoods are yet to be rebuild.

Finally, in my national capacity, I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations A/64/PV.111

General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

111st plenary meeting
Friday, 20 August 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 70 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Oman.

Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): The world is watching with grave concern the unfolding disaster in Pakistan, whose dimensions we continue to ascertain. The floods, which began more than three weeks ago, have affected about one fifth of the area of the country, with disastrous effects on its agricultural heartland. The scale of the flooding is indeed great. It has resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 people and threatens the lives of many others. The number of those displaced is estimated at more than 20 million. Monsoon rains are expected to continue to fall for several weeks to come. That is very bad news for the people. In addition, there are fears that diseases such as cholera may spread, exacerbating the problems faced by the population and causing more death.

The international community cannot afford to sit back and watch this calamity unfold before our eyes without doing anything. Pakistan is in dire need of assistance for the millions who urgently require food, water, shelter and medical treatment. The United Nations has launched a $459 million Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan, and the World Bank will redirect $900 million in existing loans to Pakistan to help address the catastrophe and the recovery.

The Sultanate of Oman and its neighbour Pakistan are bound by close historical, brotherly and good-neighbourly relations. We in the Sultanate are deeply touched and saddened by the great loss of life and the damage done to infrastructure by the floods. The Sultanate of Oman expresses its full solidarity and sympathy with the people of Pakistan. In consultation with Pakistani authorities, the Government of the Sultanate of Oman has extended its full support and assistance to the Government of Pakistan to meet the urgent immediate needs of the people affected.

We pray to almighty God for the floods to recede so that the authorities can begin the daunting task of rebuilding and provide humanitarian assistance to affected people in need, start reconstruction and help to normalize people's lives and get them back to work.

On behalf of the Government of Oman, I convey our heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan on the deaths of thousands of innocent men, women and children. At this hour of need, the Sultanate of Oman stands by them and wishes them a speedy return to normalcy, development and prosperity.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of France.

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Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): For nearly three weeks, Pakistan has suffered the worst natural disaster in its history. We are shocked by the scale of the flooding, the violence of the incessant rainfall and the impact on the lives of more than 15 million Pakistanis. I should like again to express France's solidarity with the authorities and the people of Pakistan, as well as our heartfelt support to the victims and their families.

Faced with a disaster of such scale, the international community must mobilize in a massive way, side by side with the Pakistani State, to assist the population. The United Nations must remain at the forefront of the international community's efforts. We welcome the personal commitment of the Secretary-General, who has just travelled to disaster-affected areas, and of the President of the General Assembly, who took the initiative to convene this meeting. We also welcome the presence in New York of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Assistance to Pakistan.

As yesterday we marked World Humanitarian Day, I would like to pay tribute to the United Nations teams and humanitarian personnel present in Pakistan and throughout the world. They are discharging their mission with exemplary devotion and bravery. I pay special tribute to those who have lost their lives helping the most vulnerable. Finally, I would like to recall the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian assistance, which are the very keys for success.

We are proud of having, over the years, developed a close relationship of trust with Pakistan. President Sarkozy reaffirmed his commitment to this special relationship when he welcomed President Zardari in Paris on 2 August. Our exacting bilateral dialogue means that today we can address any issue with our Pakistani friends, whether we are discussing the fight against terrorism, the regional situation or economic cooperation. Pakistan in turn knows that it can count on France's support to meet the huge challenges it has to face.

There is a pressing need to assist victims now and to meet and respond to the emergency appeal made by the United Nations. France has already mobilized €1.3 million of bilateral assistance to provide foodstuffs, drinking water, shelter and medicine to individuals who require them, which is our immediate priority. France has also committed, through the European Union — and I here associate myself with the statement made yesterday by Belgium on behalf of the European Union (see A/64/PV.110) — to mobilize additional funds to face this huge humanitarian crisis.

In addition to its financial assistance, France is contributing material assistance. It has decided to send an aircraft carrying 70 tons of humanitarian assistance cargo, including shelter, blankets and water purification pills. It is also providing means of transport for French non-governmental organizations that are contributing emergency assistance to the many victims in Pakistan.

France is also ready to mobilize national military strategic transportation resources to transport international assistance within the framework of the airlift operation planned by NATO, which will thus accelerate the provision of assistance to Pakistan. France is ready and willing to participate in consideration of how to improve prevention, planning and risk management systems for natural disasters in Asia.

Beyond this emergency, the international community must rapidly commit in a massive and sustainable way, side by side with the Government of Pakistan, on the path to reconstruction. All the damage caused to infrastructure, means of communication, key public services and economic sectors, will have a serious impact whose scale will only become apparent once the rains have stopped. We must assist the Pakistani authorities in meeting this reconstruction challenge while continuing our commitment to the path of reform and the fight against terrorism. What is at stake here is the security of Pakistan's inhabitants, including the 3 million individuals displaced in the north-west by the conflict against Islamic fundamentalists. The stability of the region is also at stake, as is the success of our collective action in Afghanistan.

We are ready and willing to mobilize our assistance and resources to that end. During the pledging conference in Tokyo in April 2009, France pledged $300 million. Half of that amount has already been disbursed for economic development projects in Pakistan, including in the water and energy sectors. Projects planned for this year, such as the rehabilitation of the hydroelectric power plant in Jaban and the financing of a water treatment station in Lahore, will

contribute to meeting the problems of access to drinking water that are especially pressing at this point.

We hope that the European Union too will now begin the process of identifying reconstruction actions which need to be undertaken. The European Union and Pakistan have forged a global partnership which must be strengthened. The European Union can further increase its contribution to the economic development of Pakistan, for which it is already its leading trade partner. Our efforts will be further carried out in various multilateral forums, such as financial and development forums.

Finally, we will be mobilized in the framework of the Group of Friends of Democratic Pakistan. The next ministerial meeting of the Group, which is planned for mid-October in Brussels, should serve as an opportunity to take stock of reconstruction activities to be undertaken and to ensure that they fall within the framework of reforms which the Government of Pakistan must continue to undertake.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Mr. Taalas (Finland): Finland aligns itself with the statement made at the 110th meeting by the Foreign Minister of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to express our heartfelt support to the people of Pakistan. The catastrophic floods have provoked very strong feelings of sympathy in my country. This year, Finland has allocated a total of €5.7 million in humanitarian assistance to Pakistan. Our contribution has been channelled through the United Nations system and Finnish aid groups. Out of this amount, a total of €4.4 million is new funding earmarked to support the victims of the floods. Finnish relief personnel are already on the ground, and more will be coming.

Besides humanitarian aid to Pakistan, Finland has announced a commitment of €3 million to the multi-donor trust fund for reconstruction and development in Pakistan's North-West Frontier province. Finland will continue to stand by Pakistan.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Loulichki (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like to begin by warmly welcoming the initiative of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, to convene this meeting — crucial for the brotherly people of Pakistan. On behalf of my country, I would like to once again extend to the people of Pakistan our deepest condolences. In taking the initiative to organize this plenary meeting, the President reminds us that humanitarian and human solidarity are, in essence, collective and universal.

Today's meeting sends a strong political signal to every part of the international community — Governments, international organizations, international financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, civil society and others — to come to the aid of this battered population, which finds itself helpless before floods that are greater than any before in the history of that country. The tragic circumstances of some 20 million people command our attention, and we hope that today's meeting will effectively enhance the mobilization and commitment of the international community to take up the challenge posed by natural disasters.

On the basis of the strong and friendly ties that bind the Moroccan and Pakistani people, His Majesty King Mohammed VI gave instructions, at the first announcement of this catastrophe, to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to the Pakistanis who have been affected, through a financial package of roughly $1 million and humanitarian assistance of a further $1 million in the form of medication and pharmaceuticals. The Kingdom of Morocco believes that, despite the scope of this natural disaster and its impact on the families and loved ones of the victims, the Pakistani people will be able to recover the faith and strength it needs to overcome this gruelling ordeal and recover from its devastating consequences.

While Morocco welcomes the launching last week of the Pakistan Initial Flood Emergency Response Plan, we believe nonetheless that the financial assistance of $460 million called for by the Plan is far from enough to meet the expectations and the urgent needs of the affected population. We hope that the impulse for brotherly solidarity will gain momentum and that the assistance that will finally be provided will be sufficient to largely ease the burden of the Pakistani authorities, who have to face other challenges as well.

Beyond this new tragedy for the people of Pakistan, it is important to recall that natural disasters, beyond their environmental considerations, today

require urgent, collective and responsible action. The international community must work to identify appropriate and timely responses capable of combating these natural scourges and reducing their destructive impact.

In this regard, my country would like to recall the proposal made at the 2006 meeting on the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership to, inter alia, establish an African-Asian mechanism to gain, in consultation with the relevant international organizations, a better understanding of the phenomenon of natural disasters caused by climate change. In line with this, Morocco is in favour of a comprehensive United Nations study of the regions that are exposed to such disasters and a world map of the most vulnerable areas. The ultimate objective would be to integrate risk prevention in the development strategies of countries that are in these regions.

The leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is an important asset in the effort to indeed push for the implementation of this project. The Secretary-General has clearly shown this by visiting the site of the disaster, and we would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to him.

With respect to the African continent, Morocco, at the 26 August 2008 climate change meeting, advocated a regional initiative based on African priorities for climate change adaptation. This initiative, which also aims to strengthen the technical capabilities and institutional support for adaptation, should include the establishment of an African network of centres of excellence on climate change, along the same lines as the regional information system on climatic risks in the short, medium and long term.

Finally, Morocco is in favour of the implementation of a programme of work focused on the need for an early warning system, to map the vulnerabilities and carry out risk assessments with a view to identifying the priorities of developing countries with respect to climate change adaptation.

The appeal for assistance to the affected population of Pakistan is an appeal to our common conscience and our humanity. Let us all live up to our humanitarian duty and provide proof that nations — all nations — are united in the face of this ordeal.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the President of the Assembly, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Foreign Minister Qureshi of Pakistan for the briefings on the latest developments regarding the floods in Pakistan and the humanitarian assistance efforts of the international community. I also wish to thank the Assembly President for having convened these plenary meetings on World Humanitarian Day. This gives us an opportunity to review the great significance of both respecting the guiding principles for the provision of humanitarian assistance and strengthening international cooperation and United Nations coordination on humanitarian relief activities.

The massive floods during this year's monsoon season in Pakistan, which were on a scale rarely seen, have affected about 20 million people and left thousands dead or missing. On behalf of the Chinese Government and people, I wish to express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan for the loss of life and property caused by the recent floods.

We have noted that, under the leadership and with the coordination of the Pakistani Government, relief efforts are now in full swing. The Chinese Government also commends the timely and effective response of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the relevant United Nations agencies and the Central Emergency Response Fund to support Pakistan's disaster relief efforts.

Immediately after the flooding occurred, China acted promptly to provide humanitarian support and assistance to Pakistan, thus demonstrating the profound friendship between the Chinese and Pakistani Governments and people. On 4 August, some 80 tons of urgently needed relief supplies provided by the Chinese Government arrived in Islamabad, including tents, medicine, power generators and water purification equipment, worth 10 million yuan renminbi (RMB).

The latest developments suggest that the flooding in Pakistan may pose an unprecedented humanitarian challenge. The monsoon rains in the weeks ahead will once again put to the test the humanitarian response capacity of Pakistan and the international community. The flood is merciless, but the world is full of sympathy and compassion. As tens of million of people in the affected areas in Pakistan, including several million children, are waiting anxiously for food,

drinking water, medicine and temporary shelter, the Chinese people stand in solidarity with them. We must take action immediately to pool our efforts and mobilize all available relief resources and moral support around the world.

In this regard, the Chinese Government has decided to provide an additional 50 million RMB worth of humanitarian supplies to the Pakistani Government. The first batch of relief supplies, which arrived at the affected areas yesterday, included 30 tons of food, 1,200 tents, 1,000 power generators and 23,800 blankets, as well as medicine, mineral water and water purification equipment. The rest of the relief supplies will be delivered today. The Chinese Government will continue to do what it can to provide assistance to Pakistan in the light of the development of the disaster.

I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on the adoption by consensus yesterday of resolution 64/294, on the flooding in Pakistan. The resolution sends a timely, positive and strong message of the solidarity of the international community. It will also inject fresh impetus into international efforts to support Pakistan in the areas of disaster relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal.

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): At the outset, I should like to express our appreciation the President of the General Assembly for having convened these plenary meetings to consider the humanitarian crisis in Pakistan, a friendly neighbouring country of Nepal and a fellow member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, with which we enjoy close bonds, historical ties, friendship and goodwill.

We thank His Excellency Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, for his detailed and sombre briefing on the sweeping devastation from which his country is suffering at present. Our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies go to the Government and the people of Pakistan on the unprecedented loss of life and massive destruction of livelihoods and property. And it is not over yet, as incessant rains continue unabated. As much land remains submerged in water, we see the clear danger of disease spreading as well as of impending hunger on a larger scale.

As stated here over the past two days, this natural disaster has taken a heavy toll on Pakistan, with thousands of people killed, nearly 20 million rendered homeless or otherwise affected and cropland and infrastructure destroyed on a massive scale. This devastating crisis is yet another stark example of the adverse impact of climate change events on the safety and livelihoods of people. And all this is happening against the backdrop of Pakistan's fight against extremism.

The sheer magnitude and impact of the natural catastrophe and consequent humanitarian disaster in Pakistan is beyond the capability of any country to cope with, even with all possible preparations. The video presentation made here yesterday stated that today Pakistan is calling — and humanity is calling. This is an apt reminder to us all of the need for action.

We appreciate the relief and rescue efforts of the Government of Pakistan and all the Pakistani institutions and people. We also applaud the Secretary-General for his personal leadership in responding quickly to the crisis, and we applaud the other international agencies working on the ground around the clock to provide rescue and relief and to support the flood-affected population.

The scale of the disaster, which the Secretary-General has described as a "slow-motion tsunami" (*A/64/PV.110*), is unprecedented and requires a global response of an unprecedented scale. Similarly, we express our appreciation to the international community for immediately extending a helping hand to the Government of Pakistan at this critical time. However, we should like to stress that the assistance and support must be commensurate with the scale and intensity of the devastation. We must not fail to help those in greatest need in this hour of great tragedy.

In this context, we should like to emphasize that Pakistan needs scaled-up international support and further funding to accelerate its immediate relief efforts as well as for reconstruction of its damaged infrastructure, which also calls for medium- and longer-term support. The international community must leave no stone unturned to marshal the resources necessary to respond to the needs at hand. The compassionate humanitarian ideals and humane dispensation that we all espouse as our larger driving force for common good call for us to give nothing less than our maximum help and support for Pakistan.

It is in this spirit that the Government of Nepal has decided to make a modest contribution of 10 million Nepalese rupees as an expression of support and solidarity to the Government and the people of Pakistan. We call upon the international community to provide generous, maximum assistance so that relief and rescue operations on the ground do not suffer for want of resources.

In concluding, I wish for Pakistan's speedy recovery from this merciless blow of nature and for the prosperity and development of its people.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Like everyone, Australians have been very deeply saddened by the tragic humanitarian emergency in Pakistan, and I should like to convey the condolences of all Australians to the people of Pakistan, who are suffering so badly and who will continue to suffer over the days, weeks and months ahead.

All speakers have recognized the terrible and enormous nature of this disaster and the magnitude of its effects. Those effects, as has been said, are likely to worsen. As I learned from Ambassador Haroon this morning, the unprecedented volume and — to use the word of the representative of France — "violence" of that flooding continues and will continue.

In these appalling circumstances, it is obvious, as we all recognize, that the generous support of the international community is crucial to meet three needs: the urgent, immediate humanitarian needs of the Pakistani people; Pakistan's rebuilding in the short term after the floods; and then, of course, the longer-term economic prosperity and stability of that country.

On Tuesday this week, conscious of the appeal by the United Nations and the Government of Pakistan for further assistance, Australian Prime Minister Gillard announced that Australia would increase its contribution to the humanitarian effort by a further $24 million, bringing Australia's total commitment so far to $35 million. Including in that amount is $22 million through United Nations agencies and $1 million in relief supplies airlifted by the Australian Defence Forces.

Beyond the immediate needs, as I have indicated, it is of course essential that the international community commit itself to supporting Pakistan for the longer term. When the present flood water recede, we know that the crisis will, terribly, continue, and that the economic, social and environmental effects will be felt for years to come. While meeting emergency needs is obviously a first priority, planning and strategic assessments for longer-term rehabilitation will be decisive for Pakistan's recovery after the floods.

We welcome the Government of Pakistan's commissioning of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank to develop a damage and needs assessment. That assessment obviously needs to be thorough and to translate very quickly into action plans.

We also welcome the Pakistan Government's intention to reconvene the Pakistan Development Forum in the near future. For the Forum to be most effective, we suggest it draw on the outcomes of the damage and needs assessment and have an agenda that builds a genuine partnership between the Government of Pakistan and the international community throughout the flood crisis and the years of rebuilding to come. An important role for the Forum will be to include policy dialogue on development challenges and economic reform.

Australia will continue to work with the Government of Pakistan and the international community to support the people of Pakistan to address their human, economic, security and development challenges in this immediate crisis and, we commit, over the longer term into the future. All members of the international community must do what we can to help in these extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Dunlop (Brazil): Brazil welcomes the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to convene the Assembly to consider the humanitarian emergency resulting from the floods that are afflicting Pakistan. It is noteworthy that as we hold events to mark the second World Humanitarian Day, the importance of the work of humanitarian actors has been made painfully clear by this disaster.

We are struck by the unprecedented scale of this calamity, particularly as the floods continue to swell and as more rains are expected in the coming weeks. Brazil welcomes the efforts by the Government of

Pakistan to face this challenge, while recognizing that the unforeseeable dimensions of the floods impose limits on national capacities to fully respond to the aftermath of the disaster. The international community must therefore provide assistance to the victims of the floods in Pakistan. The humanitarian response must address both the immediate life-saving needs and the long-term recovery and reconstruction needs in the affected regions. This calls for scaling up the support provided so far. It also warrants continued engagement from the international community in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.

We note with satisfaction the initial response provided by the United Nations system. Brazil is also pleased to see that donors are stepping up their contributions. Yet, more is required if we are to face the challenges posed by the floods in Pakistan in a timely manner. We thus urge all those in a position to do so to contribute within their capacity to the international efforts in support of the Government of Pakistan.

In solidarity with the Pakistani people, Brazil has contributed $1 million to the relief efforts, channelled through the World Food Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Our contribution aims at enabling the acquisition of goods according to the priorities of the Pakistani Government, in order to address the food, shelter, clothing and health needs of vulnerable populations. We are also supporting the setting up of temporary educational facilities for internally displaced persons and refugees, as well as the implementation of quick-impact projects aimed at recovery of educational infrastructure damaged by the floods.

We would like to highlight in this context the positive contribution made by schools to prevention, alertness, response and recovery efforts in relation to humanitarian emergencies. The humanitarian assistance provided by Brazil takes into account the needs of students affected by disasters by supplying food, educational material and school tents so as to contribute to continuing educational activities and to a rapid return to normal work conditions. It is paramount to ensure the realization of the right to education in emergency situations.

In its provision of humanitarian assistance, Brazil is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence and relevant General Assembly resolutions, particularly resolution 46/182, as well as by the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention and international cooperation.

Finally, we welcome the adoption of the resolution entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan" (resolution 64/294). It is a clear sign of the political will of all Governments to come to the assistance of those in need. It is now time for us to walk the walk and ensure that this political will materializes in concrete assistance to the millions of people affected by the floods.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Cuba would like to express its condolences to the victims of the serious disaster which recently occurred in Pakistan as a result of intense rain which has caused the heaviest flooding of the past 80 years. This has affected nearly the entire territory of that brotherly nation. The extent of the catastrophe can be seen in the 1,600 people who have lost their lives and more than 20 million who have been affected by the disaster, among whom 3.5 million children who risk contracting serious diseases. According to reports, many more of our Pakistani brethren could lose their lives if the international community does not immediately offer the assistance required.

Cuba, a small developing country, has contributed modestly towards assistance for many countries affected by disasters. A few years ago, we worked together with the people of Pakistan when the earthquake affected that country. As a result of that cooperation, more than 900 Pakistani young people are being trained today as physicians in Cuban universities. We will continue, within our capacity, to provide the support that is our main wealth: the human capital created by the revolution and by our best experiences.

We regret the loss of lives and the material damage caused by climatic events that have affected thousands of people around the world, in particular in countries of the South. Here, we reaffirm the importance of meeting official development assistance commitments and promoting United Nations

programmes intended to effectively support the efforts of national authorities in developing countries.

Increasingly, we see with concern the consequences of climate change and ecological imbalance, which are causing an increasing number of natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies in various parts of the world. Hence the importance of working quickly to achieve a more ambitious climate change agreement, which would safeguard the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol and which would take into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Cuba considers it extremely important to continue to strengthen the leadership and influence of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction as the coordinating body for international efforts. Likewise, we are committed to continue to cooperate with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team. We underscore the importance of international cooperation in the area of humanitarian assistance and reiterate the role of the State in initiating, organizing, coordinating and providing humanitarian assistance within its territory when a country has been affected by a natural disaster, in line with General Assembly resolutions and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015.

Cuba reaffirms that humanitarian assistance must be delivered with full respect for the guiding principles recognized in resolution 46/182 and rejects the imposition of vague concepts which could be easily manipulated to justify any action or to violate the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. It is vital that States be the ones, in situations requiring humanitarian assistance, to request such assistance and provide their consent, in order to receive the assistance in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter without any distortion or conditionalities.

Cuba is a country that has been regularly affected by meteorological events, and we know through our own experience the serious human and material damage that can be caused by such climatic events. We would therefore like to express our sincere solidarity with Pakistan.

Its national authorities, in coordination with the United Nations, have identified the most immediate assistance priorities: the provision of food, drinking water and water purification, tents and medical services and restoring access by repairing damaged roads and transportation networks. They also note the importance of monitoring the sanitation situation to prevent any possible outbreak of water-borne diseases such as cholera or diarrhoea.

Furthermore, it is crucial to provide support to the Pakistani authorities to enable them to enter the recovery and reconstruction period as soon as possible. For our country, the only way of facing the devastating fury of nature is to use the resources of our planet in the service of those most affected, without recourse to petty commercial interests or national self-interest. Solidarity and international cooperation are required.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim Bonghyun (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening these meetings on the tragic situation in Pakistan at this critical juncture. I commend his leadership in the adoption of resolution 64/294 in this regard, which we fully support.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's recent visit to Pakistan was timely. He has called the situation there unprecedented and heart-wrenching, and now is the time for the international community to respond swiftly to his pleas to help the people in the flood-stricken areas. I am sure that these meetings will be effective in mobilizing further support from the international community for the people in need.

The damage inflicted by the flood is vast and deep. One fifth of the country is under flood waters. The size of the affected area is similar to that of the Korean peninsula. The total damage has not yet been fully assessed, as the rains are continuing while the monsoon season sets in. The destruction of bridges and roads makes access for aid workers very difficult. Heavy damage to agricultural areas is an indicator that the consequences of this disaster may be long-lasting and severe.

In this regard, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea, I express our deep sympathy and give our condolences to the victims of the floods and the Pakistani Government. We are profoundly saddened by the loss of life and the destruction of livelihoods

and communities. A huge number of people have died, including some whom I met personally when I served in Pakistan. I express my personal sympathy and condolences to their families.

The Government of the Republic of Korea has decided to contribute $1 million in kind, with shelter, food, water, sanitation facilities and medication. In addition to my Government's support, Korean civil society and the private sector, including non-governmental organizations and private corporations, have mobilized more than $674,000 for the relief effort. We will act quickly to make sure our help reaches people in need as soon as possible.

Our work in Pakistan has only just begun. The international community must realize the urgency of this crisis. The funding response is improving, but donors, Governments and the general public have not done enough to help Pakistan. We must act rapidly before the floods claim more victims.

Despite the magnitude of this tragedy, I would like to emphasize that our efforts can make a meaningful difference. But we must we act swiftly.

Lastly, I have faith that the Pakistani people have the strength to withstand this disaster. Together, we will repair the damage of the flood and rebuild Pakistan. The Government of the Republic of Korea is fully prepared to stand with the Pakistani people in coping with this disaster and in the process of rehabilitation and reconstruction, with the cooperation of the United Nations and the international community.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Kohona (Sri Lanka): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the President of the Assembly for initiating resolution 64/294, on the floods in Pakistan, which we have unanimously adopted, and for convening these plenary meetings. We also thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Mr. Qureshi, for his presence at these meetings and for his detailed briefing (see A/64/PV.110). The updated information on the situation on the ground provided by the Secretary-General, including on the relief effort, is greatly appreciated by my delegation.

Sri Lanka wishes to join other members of the Assembly in conveying once again our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Pakistan on the tragic loss of life and the widespread devastation caused by the torrents of water that have flooded that ancient land. This is indeed an unprecedented and mind-numbing calamity, described by UNICEF as the biggest emergency on the planet today. We in Sri Lanka share the pain of the people of Pakistan.

My delegation also associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The President of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksa, contacted Prime Minister Gillani of Pakistan as soon as the news of the rising floodwaters ravaging Pakistan reached us and conveyed assurances of our strong solidarity with the efforts of the Government and the people of Pakistan to cope with the inundation of enormous stretches of heavily populated areas.

As a country that was devastated by the Indian Ocean tsunami five years ago and was readily assisted by the international community, we are able to fully empathize with the distress confronting the Government and people of Pakistan. We have no doubt, of course, that with the support of the international community and through its own national efforts, the Government of Pakistan will be able to provide relief for those affected by the disaster and to rebuild its country.

As a token of our support and solidarity, the Government of Sri Lanka dispatched a C-130 military aircraft with a consignment of essential food items on 8 August 2010. A 17-member Sri Lankan medical team is already tending to the victims. Sri Lanka remains fully prepared to extend any other form of assistance that the Government of Pakistan may require and will continue to support the work of the United Nations as a contributor to the Central Emergency Response Fund.

We also convey our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the leadership that he has demonstrated in ensuring that emergency relief reaches the victims without delay and for coordinating international support for long-term reconstruction and rehabilitation work in Pakistan. We note that the Secretary-General has travelled to Pakistan this week to see the devastation for himself and to see how international assistance can be further galvanized. We applaud the personal interest and commitment that he has shown in these trying circumstances.

This catastrophe brought about by unprecedented flooding appears to reflect a pattern of environmental disasters that have confronted the world in recent times. Worrying climatic phenomena, most likely caused by human activity, have become more frequent. Massive forest fires resulting from a prolonged heatwave and earlier destructive floods and mudslides elsewhere come to mind. The likelihood of such climate-related disasters occurring regularly has become an ever-present worry of many regions and countries. United Nations agencies may need to be revamped and reoriented to deal with these overwhelming climate-change-related challenges.

We also recognize the valuable role played by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Sir John Holmes, the staff of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations agencies in coordinating and distributing emergency relief assistance.

My delegation would convey its appreciation to the President for providing us this opportunity to once again renew our commitment to support the people and the Government of Pakistan at this difficult time. My delegation joins other delegations in calling on the international community, particularly donor countries and international financial institutions, to extend further assistance to Pakistan, particularly assistance that complements Pakistan's own efforts, bearing in mind that this natural disaster is of unprecedented proportions and affects almost 20 million people. In this regard, we welcome the launch by the United Nations of the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. Shalgham (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening these meetings. Libya was among the first to call for this.

We wish to convey our sympathy and full solidarity to the Government and the people of Pakistan as they face the largest natural disaster in the history of their country. We reaffirm everything stated by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It has been widely reported that floods and mudslides in Pakistan have led to widespread death and destruction, the displacement of millions and untold damage to property. Everyone who has seen the damage realizes that this is one of the greatest disasters ever faced by humanity. The damage has exceeded that caused by other disasters. International institutions have been assessing the impact of this disaster. The International Monetary Fund has noted the major economic losses caused by flooding of agricultural land. Health experts have warned that major health crises could result from the floods. UNESCO has warned of flood damage to historic sites. These floods are but one example of the affects of climatic change over the past several years.

We have heard many appeals for accelerated relief to the millions of affected people, and we have affirmed the need to continue to provide assistance in the long term to rebuild flooded villages and infrastructure that has been completely destroyed. We must endeavour to address this disaster within the United Nations in the long and short term and based on the principles of international solidarity.

We are following with great concern the suffering of the Pakistani people. In the wake of the disaster, we have sent several relief flights laden with food, medicine and tents for those who have been affected. We will continue to provide such assistance in order to help rebuild disaster-affected areas.

I conclude by affirming that my country is confident that everyone will stand by the Pakistani people to assist them in recovering from this disaster.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mrs. Volken (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the President for convening these meetings. It almost goes without saying that we support resolution 64/294, which was adopted by the Assembly yesterday, and we thank the President for having undertaken that initiative. We share the feelings aroused by the catastrophic flooding in Pakistan and reaffirm our heartfelt sympathy for and solidarity with the victims of this disaster.

Switzerland commends the personal commitment of the Secretary-General and the actions already undertaken to help the millions of victims, including by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the

International Committee of the Red Cross and of course, by Member States and regional organizations.

Switzerland provided immediate financial support to humanitarian actors already present on the ground. It hurried to send additional personnel and it provided humanitarian equipment. More than $4 million have already been allocated in bilateral and multilateral aid. Additionally, the Swiss people will provide more than $15 million of private aid. To take two examples, Swiss humanitarian assistance has provided drinking water and other basic resources, including shelter materials, for 8,000 victims in the Swat valley. Further contributions, both financial and in-kind and the dispatch of additional experts is currently being considered.

Switzerland has been present in Pakistan since 1966, including in the affected areas, and will continue its efforts to contribute to rebuilding the country, rehabilitating the victims and preventing of such future disasters.

We hope that the international community will respond to the urgent appeals to help the victims and will support the Pakistani authorities and humanitarian actors. We also hope that international solidarity will provide Pakistan with the resources and expertise for reconstruction in the medium and long term.

Even before the disaster, this large country was already facing many challenges that were of concern to the whole region and to the entire international community. There is an urgent need today for humanitarian assistance; human security in all its aspects must remain a priority in Pakistan.

The extreme climatic events that we are experiencing today remind us that climate change remains one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century. It will result in uncontrollable risks and tragic damage if the entire international community does not respond resolutely. For that reason, Switzerland will spare no effort to ensure that the Climate Change Conference in Cancun will lead to concrete and substantive results.

Pakistan is today paying the heaviest imaginable price, with a devastating monsoon affecting a large swathe of Asia. Switzerland would like to concretely express its solidarity with the people and the authorities of Pakistan. We stand side by side with them, their families, mothers and fathers, and especially the children of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation associates itself with the condolences extended to the Government and the people of Pakistan.

In the Russian Federation, the news of the numerous casualties and destruction caused by the widespread flooding in Pakistan was received with a feeling of mourning and great compassion. On 2 August, expressions of sympathy and support for the relatives and friends of those who have died and for those who have suffered as a result of this natural disaster were voiced by President Dmitry Medvedev in a communication to the leadership of Pakistan. During the meeting that was held on 18 August in Sochi, the President of Russia assured the President Asif Ali Zardari of Pakistan that our country is ready to provide his country with all possible assistance to mitigate the consequences of the flooding.

Our specialized agencies are in constant contact. Russia has already provided emergency bilateral assistance to Pakistan totalling $1 million. Two Il-76 flights to Islamabad carried 73 tons of humanitarian goods, including tents, blankets, food, generators and other essential goods. Currently, the Government of the Russian Federation is considering the United Nations urgent humanitarian appeal with a view to making contributions to United Nations funds, including the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

We support the leading role of the United Nations in providing further humanitarian operations in Pakistan. The decision of the Secretary-General to allocate additional resources from the United Nations Central Emergency Relief Fund is, in our view, fully justified. We note the swiftness of the work of United Nations agencies, headed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in preparing the urgent humanitarian appeal.

In Pakistan, the international community and the United Nations have come up against a serious challenge. The unprecedented scale of the disaster, the sheer number of casualties and the destruction of infrastructure have all led to difficulties in the timely

delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance, about which members know. Past experience in conducting humanitarian operations in Pakistan provides us with a good opportunity, within the framework of the United Nations, to discuss the cohesion, timeliness and appropriateness of the global response to similar emergency humanitarian situations.

In the light of the increase in the number and scale of natural disasters, such a discussion is most timely. Its focus, in our view, should be support for the central role of the United Nations, its institutions and its instruments in an international humanitarian response and respect for the fundamental principles of the provision of humanitarian assistance.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me first express our condolences and convey the sincere empathy of my Government to the people and the Government of Pakistan for the loss of life and the suffering caused by recent events in the country.

I wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki, President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for all their efforts, for this timely plenary meeting of the General Assembly and for the earlier flash appeal in response to the humanitarian consequences of the devastating floods in our brotherly country of Pakistan. The consensus achieved in adopting resolution 64/294, considering the humanitarian situation resulting from the floods in Pakistan, is another step in strengthening emergency relief and rehabilitation efforts in the wake of the devastating floods in that country.

Since the very first days of the current disaster, the Islamic Republic of Iran has summoned all its capacity to come to the assistance of our sisters and brothers in Pakistan by mobilizing both governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as individuals. President Ahmadinejad has issued a special decree to follow up on the critical situation and is in direct contact with the highest officials in the brotherly country of Pakistan. The preliminary budget allocation of $5 million has been doubled, with a ceiling of $10 million, in order to address the urgent requirements of those in need.

As of now, three cargo planes and four heavy trailers have dispatched more than 200 tons of foodstuffs, medical supplies and other humanitarian assistance, and more is on the way. Religious leaders all over the country are providing special assistance through the mosques and other active humanitarian civil society institutions. The current situation has been discussed in the parliament, and a parliamentary delegation has been convened to follow up on the situation.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society and the Emergency Aid Committee of the late Imam Khomeini have actively embarked on this path of help by mobilizing all they could. Both of these institutions have constructive relations with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, providing medical supplies and arranging for medical teams and other humanitarian support.

In fact, crisis management, cooperation at the strategic level and coordination are all essential parts of the job ahead of us. They must be comprehensively followed up to the last detail through international cooperation in order to provide effective humanitarian assistance to the people and the Government of Pakistan, which have suffered exceptionally great destruction due to the floods. The Iranian embassy in Islamabad and our consulates general in the country are ready to facilitate delivery of the necessary assistance to the people and the Government of Pakistan.

Finally, we stand firm with the people and the Government of Pakistan and wish to offer our full support and renewed determination to help Pakistan at this difficult moment to recover, be rehabilitated and rise from this terrible disaster to the bright future it deserves.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express our condolences to the people and the Government of Pakistan. I associate myself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. I would also like to express my appreciation to His Excellency the President of the General Assembly for convening these important meetings and to the Secretary-General for his briefing on his recent visit to Pakistan in the wake of the disaster that befell that

friendly country. I would also like to commend the concrete efforts of the United Nations and the international community in helping the people of Pakistan in the aftermath of the disaster that Pakistan has been facing since the beginning of this month. Those efforts have been made by charitable organizations, Member States and the United Nations.

Such a response from all segments of the international community and its institutions is indeed commendable. However, the scale and breadth of the destruction at the humanitarian, environmental and economic levels — which some estimates indicate will exceed the impact of the tsunami disaster — requires further efforts by the international community. We therefore hope that the present meetings will chart a common path to help the people of Pakistan, 20 million of whom are reported to be displaced.

Under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, my country was among the first to send aid to address the immediate effects of the disaster following news of the floods. Currently, Qatar plans to provide assistance for the recovery, reconstruction and development phases. That is a reflection of our country's desire to provide humanitarian assistance to Pakistan, which is a friendly country whose stability is extremely important for the entire region.

The assistance provided by the State of Qatar is not confined to Government assistance. My country's non-governmental and charitable organizations have also launched fund-raising campaigns that have raised more than $2 million. That reflects the sincere humanitarian solidarity of the people of Qatar who, like other peoples of the world, have stepped forward to help the people of Pakistan.

The State of Qatar is at the forefront in contributing humanitarian aid and support, both financial and in kind, to respond to disasters all over the world, especially those afflicting developing countries. Our contributions are made through United Nations funds and programmes. We therefore call upon all Member States to respond to the appeal launched by Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance and provide support to the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan.

The severity and cruelty of natural disasters have increased in recent years, becoming more diverse and multidimensional. A feature of natural disasters is that they strike indiscriminately and have an impact on all types of people, as well as on the environment and the economy, thereby creating havoc in the international community. It is therefore important to develop a mechanism under the United Nations umbrella to stand ready to deal with natural disasters. Such a mechanism should be of a scale, and have the same readiness as, United Nations peacekeeping forces. Of course, the nature of its mandate and the readiness and training of its personnel would be different, enabling them to address the consequences of natural disasters. In that regard, I would like to mention the State of Qatar's proposal for a global humanitarian operation force. We will work with our partners to further define it, for the benefit of the international community.

We hope that the United Nations will be able to assess the situation in Pakistan accurately, fairly and on the basis of the immediate needs of the affected population. We also note that there is a need to stand by the Government of Pakistan, which is bearing the repercussions of this disaster. In that regard, we count on the efforts of Mr. Jean-Maurice Ripert, United Nations Special Envoy for Assistance to Pakistan.

In conclusion, we stand with the people and Government of Pakistan. We will continue to support Pakistan until it recovers from this crisis. We also support resolution 64/294, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan".

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri (India): Let me begin by thanking the President for his personal initiative in organizing these meetings and proposing resolution 64/294 for focused action by the international community on the humanitarian situation arising from the floods in Pakistan.

As we commemorated World Humanitarian Day yesterday, Pakistan and the international community confronted another calamity, one of the biggest natural calamities of recent times. I would like to express deep appreciation for the Secretary-General's initiative to visit the flood-ravaged areas of Pakistan and for his strenuous efforts to mobilize international assistance for Pakistan at this time of need. The high-level participation that we have witnessed at these meetings is testimony to the solidarity and commitment of the

international community to be there when one of our Member States requires help.

India and Pakistan share the same history, topography and land mass and the river systems that irrigate both sides of the border. Our region is prone to natural disasters. In our region, the vagaries of nature continue to take a heavy toll in human lives and material losses. We are familiar with the devastation and human suffering they cause and the trauma they leave behind long after their initial impact. However, in this particular case, the widespread devastation is unprecedented; its like has never, ever been witnessed in recent history. Even some parts of India bordering Pakistan have been affected by the floods.

Therefore, kindly allow me to convey to the people and the Government of Pakistan the heartfelt condolences of the people and the Government of India on the lives that have been tragically lost in this disaster. Kindly also allow me to convey the deepest sympathy of the people and the Government of India for those who have been injured and traumatized by this calamity and for the material losses that the people and the country have suffered. Our hearts and our prayers are with the near and dear of those who have died and those who have suffered and continue to suffer. We share the pain and agony and fully understand the trauma and suffering that our Pakistani brethren are living through.

Even as we meet today, the humanitarian catastrophe is still unfolding. The extent of the devastation is unparalleled. Over 10 per cent of the country's entire population has been affected and there has been extensive damage to livestock, crops and infrastructure. The magnitude of the tragedy makes it incumbent on the international community to pool its energies and resources to assist Pakistan in its efforts to rebuild and rehabilitate the devastated region.

As a member of the international community and, more significantly, as a close neighbour, India recognizes its responsibility in contributing to this global effort to extend its support to Pakistan in its hour of need. We cannot remain unaffected by this humanitarian catastrophe. We are willing to do all that is in our power to assist Pakistan in facing the consequences of the floods. We extend our wholehearted support to the Government of Pakistan in its efforts at relief and rehabilitation of the adversely affected population.

Our Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, called his counterpart from Pakistan yesterday. Our External Affairs Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, also spoke earlier with the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and expressed our sorrow and condolences to that country. As a gesture of our solidarity and sympathy, we have offered $5 million in assistance, in the first instance, for the provision of relief supplies from India, to be prioritized by the Government of Pakistan in its battle to respond to the crisis. We have offered that relief supplies could be handed over to the Pakistani authorities at the border for further distribution by them. Given our geographical proximity, the provision of relief supplies from India would save precious time and provide much-needed relief to flood victims at the earliest possible time. It is our expectation that relief supplies will start moving very shortly.

Our Prime Minister has also said that the Government of India is ready to do more to assist in the relief effort. He has also underscored that all of South Asia should rise to the occasion and extend every possible help to the people of Pakistan affected by the tragedy. As and when Pakistan is able to articulate its requirements for medium- to long-term recovery, we will, within our abilities and in accordance with the needs of Pakistan, be privileged to be of assistance.

While national authorities are, and should be, at the forefront of the humanitarian response, international solidarity and assistance guided by humanitarian principles can play a key role. We believe that the United Nations should coordinate humanitarian assistance so that it is channelled according to national priorities. The present meetings should therefore provide a vital input in developing the international community's response framework to the situation that is unfolding.

Before I conclude, I reiterate India's willingness and readiness to contribute to this global effort. What Pakistan needs today is the sustained and long-term commitment of the international community to provide relief and rehabilitation to the affected population. I am confident that the international community will not be found wanting in its support for the Government of Pakistan in its relief and rehabilitation efforts. I have no doubt that the people of Pakistan have the strength and resilience to overcome this natural disaster.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Mr. Sinhaseni (Thailand): At the outset, let me congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his initiative to convene these timely meetings of the Assembly and on the adoption of resolution 64/294, which urges the international community to provide assistance to Pakistan. As Thailand's Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, expressed in his letter to Prime Minister Gillani of Pakistan earlier this month, Thailand joins others in offering our profound condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of the devastating monsoon floods.

In the early days of the devastation, Thailand reached out with an initial pledge of $75,000 in humanitarian aid. We continue to monitor the unfolding humanitarian situation in close consultation with the Government of Pakistan. Thailand's Ministries of Health and Defence, the Royal Thai Army and the Thai Red Cross are currently coordinating to dispatch such needed items as medicine and hygiene kits to the value of $150,000. In the coming days, the Thai Foreign Ministry will be meeting with the Thai private sector, in particular Thais of Pakistani descent, to further mobilize support for the people of Pakistan.

In that connection, my delegation wishes to thank Foreign Minister Qureshi for the up-to-date information on the current humanitarian situation in Pakistan, which detailed specific needs for relief and rehabilitation. Our gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General for his briefing and to Sir John Holmes and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for coordinating humanitarian efforts and for updating us regularly on what is happening on the ground and what types of assistance are required.

Yesterday, we commemorated the second World Humanitarian Day. It was fitting that that day was chosen for the United Nations to show its solidarity with Pakistan and, even more touching, that our expressions of support have spilled over to today. Thailand intends to continue to work closely with the Government and the people of Pakistan, through all channels possible, to help see them through these difficult times.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al Oyaidi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to extend our gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for convening these meetings of the Assembly to consider humanitarian assistance for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. At the outset, allow me to express our most heartfelt condolences to the people and the Government of Pakistan. We assure them that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stands in solidarity with them.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is experiencing the worst flood disaster in its recent history, with more than 20 million people displaced. The flooding has destroyed vast areas of agricultural land, as well as roads, bridges, houses and schools. Electricity, communications and drinking water infrastructure, which have also been affected, will take a long time to repair and rebuild.

As soon as he learned news of the disaster, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, directed the establishment of an airlift between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan — which to date has included 22 aircraft — to dispatch emergency relief assistance to the people of Pakistan. That assistance has included food supplies, blankets, electrical generators, tents, drinking water, medical supplies and teams of doctors and nurses to ease the suffering of the brotherly people of Pakistan.

In addition, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques has launched a campaign to support the people of Pakistan. The entire Saudi people, including corporations, have responded to the call and have provided assistance that today exceeds $106 million. That is in addition to the in-kind assistance that has been airlifted, which exceeds $70 million in value. The airlift is continuing. We are also helping to distribute relief assistance.

In addition to that assistance, in coordination with United Nations agencies operating in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia has decided to expedite the disbursement of $100 million for emergency and humanitarian assistance to help those affected by natural disasters in Pakistan.

In conclusion, as in the past, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will spare no effort in supporting sisterly Pakistan to overcome this difficult ordeal. The assistance that the Kingdom will continue to provide to Pakistan and all other vulnerable countries reflects the vision of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques that

we all are brothers in one human family. In that spirit, we urge other States to extend assistance Pakistan. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports resolution 64/294, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan".

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Momen (Bangladesh): Let me begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for scheduling these very important and timely plenary meetings. These two days of discussion, which began yesterday, 19 August, on World Humanitarian Day, are the right occasion to pledge ourselves to the cause of humanity and the suffering of the flood-affected people of Pakistan. Allow me also to express our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General for his sincere appeal and comprehensive briefing. My delegation also commends Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, for his statement providing an update on the current flood situation in Pakistan and its ramifications for the development, peace and security of the region in particular, and of the world in general.

I also wish to state that the Bangladesh delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt, Yemen and Tajikistan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China and the Organization of the Islamic Conference respectively. In addition, I wish to briefly make several points that Bangladesh believes to be of importance.

I take the floor today against the backdrop of a severe flood that has caused extensive damage in Pakistan. Coming from Bangladesh, a country that frequently experiences such disasters, we share the pain of the people of Pakistan. Our sympathy therefore goes out to the affected people of Pakistan. I understand that this devastating flood in Pakistan has affected about 20 million people and left more than 2,000 dead. More people are likely to be affected as water continues to move towards densely populated areas. The flood victims are now in dire need of food, drinking water, shelter and medicine to prevent diseases.

This unprecedented flooding in a country like Pakistan has occurred in areas that I visited years ago and never thought would experience devastating floods. As I understand it, this is the worst flooding in 90 years. Recent experience of floods, earthquakes, mud slides, fires and tsunamis — for example in Pakistan, India, China, Bangladesh and East Asia — and wildfires in Russia, the United States and other countries, illustrate the vulnerability of the global community to the adverse effects of climate change.

They also show that the world now faces more frequent natural disasters of greater magnitude that cannot be tackled by a single country alone. Instead of a piecemeal and reactive approach, it is time for the global leadership to move decisively to face challenges and take proactive and comprehensive initiatives in the area of climate change. The current situation in Pakistan in particular makes a strong case for the early conclusion of the climate change negotiations. We cannot afford to fail humankind.

At this critical time, my delegation expresses the support, solidarity and sympathy of the Government and the people of Bangladesh to the Government and the people of Pakistan. Our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, has already conveyed our sympathy to the Prime Minister of Pakistan. In addition, Bangladesh has already committed $2 million worth of emergency relief materials to Pakistan to address the devastating flood. Bangladesh is also sending relief materials such as tents, blankets, life-saving medicines, vaccines, oral saline solution, hygiene kits, water-purification tablets, mineral water, biscuits and packaged dry food. In addition, a medical team from Bangladesh is on its way to Pakistan to assist the flood-stricken people there.

As President of the UNICEF Executive Board, I am satisfied that, along with other agencies, UNICEF is fully involved in the humanitarian operation that is being conducted under the leadership of the Government of Pakistan. In addition, I am pleased to announce that on the opening day of its forthcoming meeting, on 7 September, the Executive Board will provide a forum for Pakistan to speak on the humanitarian crisis caused by the severe floods and, in particular, the effects on children.

We in Bangladesh are experiencing erratic patterns of flooding and drought that are a direct offshoot of climate change. Just three years ago, in November 2007, cyclone Sidr struck Bangladesh, in particular its southern-western districts, with the severity of a full-blown category-4 hurricane. It affected more than 27 million people and was one of

the top 10 fiercest cyclones recorded in the past 137 years. Similarly, cyclone Aila also hit Bangladesh last year with similar ferocity, causing enormous damage. However, we survived those disasters thanks to international assistance and cooperation, our sound disaster management system and the resilience of our people. We are thankful to all the countries, organizations and entities that stepped forward with material and moral assistance in our time of great difficulty.

May I place on record here that the extensive preparations and timely action of our Government and people, along with international agencies that worked together, which was unreservedly appreciated by many, were instrumental in avoiding a larger catastrophe. However, the lesson learned is that final disbursement by our partners at times does not match initial financial pledges. That creates an additional burden on the people and delays the Government's efforts to mitigate their grievances and needs.

Pakistan will now probably need non-food items as well as food, nutrition, water and sanitation, shelter and disease surveillance. The longer-term perspective calls for disaster risk reduction while addressing needs for the rehabilitation of livelihoods, infrastructure, health and educational services and increased shelter capacity. I call upon the international community, national Governments, the private sector, business leaders and individuals to come forward to assist the flood-affected people of Pakistan to ameliorate their pain and save their lives.

I hope that the appeal launched by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to raise $460 million will continue to receive strong support from Member States in terms of greater political support and increased resource flows — most important, delivered in a timely manner.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to express our gratitude for the initiative of Assembly President Treki to convene these special meetings beginning yesterday, International Humanitarian Day, on the humanitarian consequences of the catastrophe being experienced by Pakistan. We also thank him for his initiative in submitting to us resolution 64/294, which we adopted yesterday by consensus.

We would also like to express our gratitude for the valuable information provided by the Secretary-General following his visit to Pakistan, as well as that regularly provided to us by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). We are particularly grateful for the moving testimony of Pakistan's Minister for Foreign Affairs in connection with that country's current serious catastrophe.

I should like to express the deep concern of Spain's people and leaders in connection with the recent floods throughout a large part of Pakistan's territory. We are also very concerned about the tragic humanitarian situation being experienced by the people, the risk that it may worsen and, in particular, the loss of human life. In this regard, we associate ourselves with the message of solidarity and support delivered yesterday by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union.

For its part, Spain has responded from the outset by contributing to international efforts to meet the immediate emergency assistance needs. Spain made an initial direct delivery of emergency humanitarian supplies on 4 August, which has since been followed by others, including a flight that left yesterday. We also began making disbursements for emergency food aid, which were stepped up following OCHA's launch of the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan last week.

Overall, Spain has thus far contributed almost €6 million, which is being distributed through direct shipments of humanitarian aid and through disbursements to the World Food Programme, UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. All of this is quite apart from the regular contributions Spain makes to the Central Emergency Response Fund, which has also been active since Pakistan was hit by the present crisis.

I can now announce that Spain's contribution to the international emergency response effort will increase to a total of €11 million in the coming days. With this response, Spain is seeking to meet some of the priority needs that have been identified by the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations, namely the provision of drinking water and food for the affected population, as well as the protection of the most vulnerable, especially children.

At the same time, we have placed priority on the effective and coordinated delivery of our assistance,

opting therefore for the multilateral track. We are channelling more than 90 per cent of our assistance through United Nations agencies and under the auspices of the appeal issued by OCHA as the leading body for the coordination of international humanitarian assistance. Our response will continue to evolve as we obtain a more precise assessment of the scope of the damage and the needs of the population and the priorities established by the Pakistani authorities, both in the immediate emergency phase as well as the subsequent recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases.

I should like to reiterate our message of full support for and solidarity with the people of Pakistan and to repeat that we stand fully ready to work in a coordinated way and to assist in the emergency assistance tasks being carried out by the international community under the coordination of the United Nations and in close cooperation with the Pakistani authorities.

Spain is committed to the stability and security of Pakistan now and in the medium and long term, and we will actively participate in the efforts that will be developed over the weeks and months to come with those objectives in mind, both within the framework of the European Union as well as at the regional and global levels.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malta.

Mr. Borg (Malta): Malta would like to associate itself with the statement delivered yesterday by His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium on behalf of the European Union member States.

Malta would like to extend its deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan as well as to the families and relatives of the victims of the devastating floods in that country. Malta expresses its solidarity with the people and the Government of Pakistan during this time of humanitarian crisis.

My delegation would also like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan for his briefing, which enables us to understand better the challenges his country continues to face and the suffering of the afflicted Pakistani population. Malta echoes his appeal and his call for the international community to extend its generous support in overcoming this serious calamity of catastrophic proportions.

At the same time, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to highly commend both the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for the immediate and rapid response undertaken to alleviate the tragic consequences of this disaster, in particular by the launching on 11 August of the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan.

In solidarity with the people and the Government of Pakistan, the Government of Malta has decided to allocate a financial contribution of €10,000 to OCHA's Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Kleib (Indonesia): I should like once again, on behalf of the Government and the people of Indonesia, to extend my deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of Pakistan for the loss of hundreds of lives and the extensive infrastructure and property damage caused by one of the worst floods in history.

My delegation wishes to thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened these important meetings and for his statement at the 110th meeting. We should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Indonesia extends its deepest appreciation to United Nations entities for their tireless efforts in assisting and alleviating the suffering of the victims. We also wish to acknowledge the presence of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan at this very important gathering and to thank him for his comprehensive briefing on the current situation.

Indonesia associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Conference and the Asian Group.

Looking at Pakistan today, I am reminded of the situation in my country when Indonesia was hit by a tsunami in 2004. It was considered an unprecedented natural disaster for humanity. We therefore fully understand that the present situation in Pakistan is truly devastating. The scale of the disaster is so large that so

many people in so many places are in so much need. No country can handle such a situation alone. The world should be united. This is the right time to show our solidarity. We need to focus our attention on immediate assistance to prevent the second wave of death caused by water-borne diseases and food shortages. On top of that, Pakistan will also need medium- and long-term assistance for its reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

In solidarity with the Government and the people of Pakistan, the Government of Indonesia sent a cargo flight of humanitarian assistance supplies on 7 August. The supplies include: tents, beds, electrical generator units, medicines, tons of food and supplies for infants and babies, with a total value of $1 million.

Finally, let me reiterate that Indonesia will continue to work with and stand behind international relief efforts to assist the Government and people of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Cavanagh (New Zealand): I would like to begin by offering condolences from the people of New Zealand to the people of Pakistan. We have been shocked by the severity of the flooding and deeply saddened by the unprecedented losses to life, livelihoods and the environment. We are aware that this is the middle of the monsoon season and that the flooding could continue. It is tragic that the rains that might have brought life-giving relief to such an arid region have had such devastating consequences.

The humanitarian and reconstruction challenge ahead for Pakistan and the international community is of an unprecedented scale. That the people of Pakistan are suffering once again, only five years after the massive earthquake in 2005, only intensifies the tragedy. The humanitarian and reconstruction challenge ahead for Pakistan and the international community is of an unprecedented scale. New Zealand stands alongside others in the international community, ready to assist Pakistan with the huge task ahead.

Within days of the tragedy unfolding, New Zealand contributed $2 million to the relief effort, to be channelled primarily through UNICEF and the Red Cross, but also through non-governmental organizations with strong ties to the community. Today I am please to announce that the New Zealand Government has doubled the initial contribution and has committed a further $2 million in support of the humanitarian relief efforts in Pakistan, bringing New Zealand's total contribution, so far, to $4 million. Today's additional $2 million contribution will be channelled through the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan, managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The New Zealand funding is not earmarked, in order to provide greatest flexibility for agencies to respond as required.

Finally, New Zealand would like to also offer its support for the tremendous efforts undertaken by those involved so far in the relief effort in extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Mikec (Croatia): On behalf of the Republic of Croatia and its people, I should like to express our deepest condolences and sympathy to the people and the Government of Pakistan on the immense loss of life and widespread devastation resulting from the catastrophic monsoon rains affecting millions of people in Pakistan. The scale of the natural devastation and destruction that has displaced millions and caused enormous damage to crops, livestock and infrastructure seems at the moment to indicate an insurmountable calamity.

Assistance is a matter of the utmost urgency, and we therefore appreciate the prompt reaction of the United Nations, other relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the whole international community in providing it.

I would like to commend the President of the General Assembly for having convened these timely meetings. We also welcome the adoption of resolution 64/294, on humanitarian and disaster relief assistance for Pakistan, as well as the launching of the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan. Natural disasters such as this one further accentuate the role and importance of United Nations humanitarian assistance efforts.

Croatia extends its wholehearted support to the Government and the people of Pakistan, and is joining the international community in providing assistance. Thus, the Croatian Government has decided to donate, through the Croatian Red Cross, 1 million kunas —

around $180,000 — for assistance to the victims of the floods.

Let me reiterate once again our solidarity with the Pakistani people, in the hope that, with help from all of us, they will overcome these difficult times and successfully recover. We call upon Member States and the international community to further support the efforts of the Government and the people of Pakistan. Our thoughts will remain with the many millions of people affected by this tragedy.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We thank the President of the General Assembly for having convened these meetings to demonstrate the solidarity of the international community with Pakistan at a time when they have great need of our solidarity in the face of the destructive flooding in their country. We welcome yesterday's most timely adoption of resolution 64/294.

We pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his efforts and to United Nations specialized agencies for their action to provide emergency humanitarian assistance and to coordinate its delivery with the Pakistani Government.

Once more we convey our condolences to Pakistan and its people and our solidarity with them with respect to this disaster, which has caused great loss of life and material damage. It is the policy of State of Kuwait to respond to humanitarian appeals, and last week we decided to make a contribution of $5 million. But in the light of the severity of the disaster, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait, subsequently decided to double this contribution to $10 million. The Kuwaiti Red Crescent, in coordination with our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance on Kuwaiti aeroplanes, whose flights to Pakistan with emergency cargo have begun. Ten per cent of the total sum will be allocated to United Nations agencies with teams on the ground working to provide humanitarian assistance to Pakistan.

A campaign to collect donations is also under way; in coming days civil society institutions and public and private sector groups will participate. So far, more than $2 million in contributions have been announced.

We have been in contact with the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All that has been said yesterday and today, we reiterate to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, so that he can return home with the clear message that the friends of Pakistan will not be mere observers: the international community will assist in any way it can. This is a moral and humanitarian responsibility, and all of us must take part in rebuilding all that the floods have destroyed.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Ms. Ivanović (Serbia): At the outset let me express, on behalf of my Government and the people of Serbia, our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the devastating floods in Pakistan and our friendship and solidarity with the Government and the people of Pakistan. The scale of a disaster that has caused a heavy loss of life, displacement and damage to homes and livelihoods, environment and infrastructure deserves a prompt and decisive reaction from the international community.

In that respect, I should like to praise His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki for his initiative to convene these important meetings, which have resulted in the adoption of resolution 64/294, expressing the commitment of United Nations Member States to bring adequate and timely help to those most in need in Pakistan.

Like many of the Governments whose representatives delivered statements yesterday and today, the Serbian Government recently adopted a decision on providing urgent humanitarian assistance to Pakistan. We shall soon be in a position to provide information on the level and form of the assistance to be sent to Pakistan and we shall do our utmost to deliver it as soon as possible. This meeting and the detailed presentation made yesterday by His Excellency Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan (see A/64/PV.110) will surely help us in determining what kind of assistance will be most appropriate to the current humanitarian situation.

It is significant that yesterday we commemorated World Humanitarian Day, paying tribute to the thousands of humanitarian workers who have lost their

lives while performing their noble duties of helping people worldwide in very dire circumstances, as well as all those dedicated humanitarian workers currently in the field who spare no effort in helping vulnerable populations around the globe. In order to enable them to carry out their activities, it is our shared responsibility to act in a timely manner and provide adequate assistance whenever and wherever humanitarian emergencies occur. We are convinced that these meetings will contribute to that aim.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): I would like to convey the deepest condolences of the Government and the people of Afghanistan to the Government and the people of Pakistan, our neighbours, for their loss during this tragedy, and to express our full solidarity with them as they recover and rebuild in the coming months and years.

The United Nations as an organization reminds us constantly that we do not exist in isolation. More than ever, we share the joy and pain of our fellow human beings. I want to assure the Pakistani people that they are not alone in this struggle and that the international community and this great Organization, including Afghanistan, are here to assist them. Afghanistan and Pakistan share a long border and common languages, religion, culture and history, and we acutely feel the pain and anguish of our brothers and sisters in Pakistan during this tragedy.

In this regard, I should like to welcome resolution 64/294 and encourage the international community to give generously in order to minimize the suffering of the Pakistani people and speed the recovery process. Afghanistan has already pledged $1 million in aid, despite our own difficult situation, and has sent four helicopters and more than 4 tons of medical supplies, along with 48 medical and humanitarian personnel. The international presence in Afghanistan, both the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), has also leapt to the assistance of the Pakistani people, both directly and by funnelling aid from outside. We will continue to work closely with our brothers and sisters in Pakistan to offer them a helping hand and a shoulder to lean on during this difficult time.

Thousands of Afghan refugees in Pakistan are also among those suffering, as three refugee camps have been largely destroyed, affecting more than 3,000 families. Our Consul General in Peshawar has already distributed 1,000 blankets, and is working closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to ensure that these families are cared for.

None of us can remain indifferent in the face of such destruction. More than 14 million people have lost their homes and their livelihoods, and many have lost their lives. We have a common responsibility, as human beings, to come together and assist the Government and the people of Pakistan however we can, so that this disaster will not result in further tragedy. It is our hope that the international community will demonstrate its solidarity with the people and the Government of Pakistan by responding promptly and generously to any request from Pakistan for assistance in their plight.

Again, I reiterate to the Pakistani people and Government the full support of my own Government and people: we will assist them further through all available channels.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Touray (Sierra Leone): The delegation of Sierra Leone expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for having convened these meetings to discuss the current humanitarian situation in Pakistan triggered by the unprecedented torrential rains and floods that have caused so much grief, pain and suffering to the people of that very friendly country. I take this opportunity to convey, on behalf of the Government and people of Sierra Leone, our sincerest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan and to the bereaved families on the tragic loss of life and devastation at this moment of such terrible despair. My delegation views this gathering as timely and looks forward to very fruitful deliberations and commitments on ways of alleviating the suffering of the victims of this disaster.

We fully align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Group of 77 and China by the representatives of Ghana, Egypt, Tajikistan and Yemen, respectively.

We also wish to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan for his briefing yesterday on the ongoing desperate situation in his country. Indeed, his statement and the images from Pakistan seen in the short documentary on the situation screened in the General Assembly Hall yesterday are quite devastating and heartrending. My delegation accordingly takes the floor to express its wholehearted support for and appreciation of the consensus on resolution 64/294, adopted yesterday by the Assembly. We do so in full solidarity with and sympathy for all of those who have been affected by this natural disaster in various ways and also those who have lost their loved ones.

We commend His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership and his efforts to alleviate the suffering of the affected masses, evident in his prompt visit to the flood-ravaged areas in order to obtain first-hand information on the extent of the damage caused by the floods with a view to sensitizing the international community on the humanitarian, recovery and reconstruction needs of the country. We equally thank those Member States and humanitarian organizations that have risen to the occasion and are committed and ready to support the Government and people of Pakistan at this very difficult moment.

Let me conclude by reiterating our support for the spirit and objectives of resolution 64/294, which we have here adopted by consensus. We pledge our unflinching moral and spiritual support to our Pakistani brothers, sisters and friends. We fervently hope that those who have lost their loved ones, homes and valued possessions will muster enough courage, wisdom, will and power to overcome the impact of the destruction caused by the floods and be able to resume normal life again. And we urge, in these circumstances, continued international involvement to ease their plight.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): We thank the President of the General Assembly for convening these meetings, and we associate ourselves with the statements made yesterday on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77 and China, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Asian Group. We wish to extend our condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan on the loss of life and on the suffering of the victims of the floods.

The Malaysian Government has made a contribution amounting to $1 million to Pakistan. This contribution is a manifestation of the solidarity and support of the people and the Government of Malaysia to Pakistan in its time of need. The contribution was extended to His Excellency Mr. Masood Khalid, High Commissioner-designate of Pakistan in Malaysia, by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia on 12 August. In addition, Malaysia has also provided assistance in kind to the flood victims, and we shall continue to do so.

At the non-governmental level, a team from MERCY Malaysia is currently in Pakistan. The team, in collaboration with the Pakistan Islamic Medical Association, has established two clinics, in the Nowshera and Charsadda districts, to assist those who need medical attention and help.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Monaco.

Mrs. Bruell-Melchior (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): In the face of the devastating flooding caused by the torrential rainfall which has raged for over three weeks in Pakistan, the Government and the people of the Principality of Monaco wish to convey their solidarity and sympathy to the Government and the people of Pakistan.

The Secretary-General's account has reaffirmed the unprecedented scale of the disaster and has underscored the evolving and very alarming situation faced by the people of Pakistan. The Principality welcomes the adoption of resolution 64/294, which welcomes the 11 August launch of the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan and the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General to intensify the global relief and reconstruction operations.

The Principality wishes to respond to the call of the United Nations and to express its support to the Government of Pakistan to meet the most pressing humanitarian needs of the now 4 million homeless individuals, 8 million individuals dependent on humanitarian assistance and 20 million individuals affected in one way or another.

Thus, within the framework of its emergency humanitarian assistance, the Principality will disburse €100,000 to the Department of Health Action in Crises of the World Health Organization to contribute to the general effort already undertaken in the field of

emergency health and to combat the spread of water-borne diseases in particular.

My country takes this opportunity to thank the many actors who are ensuring the deployment of this humanitarian assistance on the ground.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Montenegro.

Mr. Šćepanović (Montenegro): At the outset, I would like to express, on behalf of the Government and the people of Montenegro, our sincerest and most heartfelt sympathy and solidarity with the people of Pakistan on the tragic losses, enormous damage and tremendous suffering they have experienced following this unprecedented natural disaster.

Allow me to welcome the holding of these plenary meetings of the General Assembly devoted to the strengthening of the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations. I wish to thank Assembly President Treki for convening these special meetings, which are timely and greatly appreciated, and to express our strong support for the initiative to submit and adopt resolution 64/294, on strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan.

I would like also to commend the United Nations and the Secretary-General for their efforts and contributions, through the relevant agencies and mechanisms, in encouraging and providing the widest possible emergency assistance and long-term support for rehabilitation in the aftermath of these catastrophic floods.

Pakistan is currently witnessing one of the gravest natural disasters in recent history and is facing a most challenging time. But at the same time, this is great test of solidarity for the international community and for all of our countries in responding adequately to help, assist and support the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people in their present rehabilitation and reconstruction effort, as well as in their long-term effort to build a democratic, stable, secure and prosperous Pakistan.

After having received the dramatic reports from Pakistan and in response to the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Government of Montenegro has decided to grant financial assistance in the amount of €50,000 for the emergency needs of the Pakistani people. This is symbolic but from the heart, as an expression of our solidarity and support.

As a country that in the recent past survived a natural disaster in the form of devastating earthquakes, Montenegro is deeply convinced of the importance of international action, support and assistance, both through direct contributions to emergency-affected populations and through long-term contributions for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of affected areas. We remain strongly committed to the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance.

Once again expressing our sincerest condolences and solidarity with the Pakistani people, I wish to convey our strong support for the efforts of the Pakistani Government to build a better future for Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Ms. Calcinari Van Der Velde (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela fully aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt and Yemen on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, respectively. Likewise, we thank the President of the General Assembly for convening these important meetings, which coincide with the commemoration of World Humanitarian Day, which took place yesterday, 19 August.

My delegation also welcomes the introductory statements made by the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, the information provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the moving video screened yesterday in this Hall. All of this shows the very precarious situation afflicting Pakistan.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on behalf of its people and Government, would like to express its most sincere feelings of solidarity to the people and the Government of Pakistan for the grave situation they are currently facing following the devastating floods, which have taken an alarming toll in human lives, injuries and other victims as well as flooding a large

part of Pakistan's territory. Likewise, we express our most sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of the thousands of victims and our deep sorrow at the significant material damage that has been caused by this natural disaster.

Our delegation reaffirms the content of resolution 46/182 of December 1991, which established the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. These principles must be scrupulously respected within the framework of international assistance. We therefore reject any attempt to impose actions or measures that seek to interfere in the internal affairs of States and/or to fulfil reprehensible geopolitical interests in the region.

International cooperation must be carried out in accordance with the principle of solidarity and be entirely altruistic. In this respect, we call upon the international community to continue and even intensify their recovery, reconstruction and development efforts, in particular in the affected areas of Pakistan, given the serious socio-economic consequences that this unfortunate and alarming tragedy entails.

To conclude, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela hopes for a prompt recovery for those who are suffering the effects of the devastating flooding in Pakistan, and we hope that these effects will be overcome for the well-being of the Pakistani people.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Ben Lagha (Tunisia): I thank the President of the Assembly for convening these special plenary meetings. His initiative is highly appreciated, as it comes at crucial time, when Pakistan most needs the international community to stand with it.

At the outset let me present, on behalf of my Government, my most sincere condolences to the people and the Government of Pakistan following the unprecedented floods that have been devastating the country over the past weeks. We are deeply saddened by the heavy loss of life and widespread devastation affecting millions of people in that brotherly country.

In these difficult times, my Government would like to reiterate its sympathy and solidarity with the people and the Government of Pakistan and stands ready to join the international community in its efforts to alleviate the suffering of the victims of this natural disaster.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his personal engagement to mobilize international humanitarian aid. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — along with the United Nations family in general — is doing its utmost to provide support and relief and it should be commended for its tireless efforts. These unprecedented floods demand unprecedented assistance, to use the Secretary-General's expression.

It is in such difficult times that solidarity attains its full meaning, as every single act of generosity matters to thousands or millions of people. Tunisia reacted immediately, at the very beginning of this disaster, and has dispatched a planeload of hundreds of tons of relief aid to the victims. Another planeload of humanitarian aid should be arriving today. Moreover, and in line with Tunisia's deeply rooted belief that international relations should also be based on solidarity among nations, the Tunisian head of State has decided to contribute $1 million to further help the Government of Pakistan in its relief efforts.

Once again, I thank the President of the Assembly for convening these timely meetings and for giving us this opportunity to express our sympathy for and solidarity with the people and the Government of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Rio Group, I express to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan our sincere feelings of sorrow and solidarity regarding the devastating catastrophe that has affected that country. These feelings were also expressed in the Rio Group statement of 2 August, which also conveys our most sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the people and the Government of Pakistan.

In my national capacity, allow me to add the voices of Chile's people and authorities to the expressions of sympathy and solidarity to the people and authorities of Pakistan with respect to the immense emergency that faces them. Chile aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Egypt and Yemen on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, respectively.

Given our own experience, we attach great value to the support that the international community provides to address the devastating effects of natural disasters. That is why we want to be part of the support effort for Pakistan, even if we have to do it within the limitations imposed by the devastating consequences of the earthquake that struck us at the beginning of this year.

As a symbol of the solidarity of our people and our authorities with the people and the authorities of Pakistan, Chile will make a symbolic contribution to the Pakistan Initial Floods Emergency Response Plan and will provide support through the multilateral response to natural disasters.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Nwosa (Nigeria): I thank the President of the Assembly for convening these meetings at this crucial point in the history of Pakistan to show our solidarity with the people and the Government of that country. This is a clear demonstration of the commitment of the international community to promote and protect our collective well-being.

Permit me to reiterate Nigeria's support for the Government and the people of Pakistan and to assure them that they are not alone in this period of grief. Nigeria commiserates with the families of the victims who lost their lives because of this deluge. As a matter of urgency, we call for international efforts that will assist in the rehabilitation and reintegration of displaced people in Pakistan.

We are confronted with a disaster of unimaginable proportions. The statistics are as daunting as they are challenging. Already 1,600 people have lost their lives, while 20 million people are affected by the consequences of the disaster. Vast areas of agricultural land have been submerged; many farm crops ready for harvesting have perished and 700,000 houses have been destroyed.

Urgent action is required to provide humanitarian assistance to the 3.5 million children further threatened by disease and hunger. The international community must come up with strategic plans that focus on immediate delivery and reconstruction to enable the people of Pakistan to regain their livelihoods.

The unprecedented intensity of the inundation, coming so soon after the earthquake in Haiti, and the level of human misery in the inundated areas of Pakistan point to the need for concerted action by all members of the international community to deal with this humanitarian catastrophe. The urgent and sustained action must begin now in order to pre-empt imminent secondary calamities such as diarrhoea, cholera and other deadly diseases which are symptomatic of living in large numbers in makeshift camps and seriously challenged environments.

I must commend the important on-the-spot visit made by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to assess the situation in Pakistan himself, as well as his initiative to launch an appeal for the sum of $459 million. This call for assistance from members of the international community is an urgent distress call underlining the importance of solidity of action and the need for some form of robustness and rapidity in getting to the drowning and the hopeless.

Finally, permit me to say again that words cannot adequately express the heartfelt condolences of the people and the Government of Nigeria to the people and the Government of Pakistan on the recent flooding calamity that has befallen the north-western part of that country. Pakistan should rest assured that the turbulence through which it is currently passing is as much a period of misery for Nigeria as it is for Pakistan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to associate myself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Group of 77 and China.

We thank the President of the General Assembly for his initiative of holding these timely meetings in solidarity with the Government and the people of Pakistan as they face the unprecedented natural disaster that struck that sisterly country, which has been enduring many challenges in the past few years. We would also like to extend our thanks to His Excellency the Secretary-General for his prompt initiative in visiting the site of the disaster and personally inspecting the situation in Pakistan.

My delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the General Assembly's consensus adoption of resolution 64/294, on the emergency

humanitarian situation caused by the floods in Pakistan. We believe that this consensus reflects the real meaning of humanitarian solidarity in the face of the natural disasters that have been increasing in frequency in recent decades owing to the inability of the international community to deal with climate change.

My country hosted His Excellency Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, President of Pakistan, in an important visit to Damascus at the peak of the flood disaster. During the visit, President Bashar Al-Assad expressed the solidarity of the Government and the people of Syria with the friendly people of Pakistan. President Al-Assad directed that a cargo plane carrying emergency assistance be dispatched to Pakistan with 35 tons of food, medical supplies and other relief items; it has now arrived in Pakistan. The President also directed that we should support any United Nations initiatives for the relief of the brotherly people of Pakistan.

My country, Syria, is confident that Pakistan will be able to ri again strongly and that it will be able to rehabilitate and rebuild. Here, we share the optimism expressed yesterday by His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan: we are fully confident in the strength of the Government and the people of Pakistan. We have faith that a positive outcome will result from the solidarity that the international community has shown to Pakistan to alleviate the impact of the unprecedented disaster.

In conclusion, I would like to express our sorrow at the material damage caused to the people of Pakistan. We express our condolences to the families of the victims, who met their deaths during the holy month of Ramadan.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mauritius.

Mr. Soborun (Mauritius): On behalf of the Government and the people of Mauritius, I would like to begin by expressing our heartfelt sympathy to the Government and the people of Pakistan, who have been affected by the flooding that resulted following the heavy monsoon rains. We send our condolences to the grieving families; our thoughts are with them.

My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Egypt and Yemen on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, respectively. My delegation would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly for the laudable initiative to organize these meetings to brief Member States on the flood situation that is affecting the people of Pakistan. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his leadership and his efforts in mobilizing support for the afflicted people of Pakistan.

For millions of farmers in Pakistan, monsoon rain represents a lifeline. They eagerly await arrival to irrigate their land with a view to reaping a better harvest. However, this year the monsoon rain has turned destroyer, ripping up rice, wheat and sugar cane crops, and leaving behind bloated corpses of cows and goats. The most destructive floods in Pakistan's recorded history have affected an estimated 62,000 square miles of land, which is about a fifth of the country. Around 20 million people have had their lives disrupted and more than 1,600 have been killed.

This prompted aid agencies to say that the present flooding has had a greater human impact than Pakistan's earthquake in 2005, the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 and the recent earthquake in Haiti combined.

Sadly, the situation is becoming more perilous by the hour. Water-borne diseases are rapidly spreading among tens of thousands of flood victims. Food shortages are also a major concern now, as the market prices of essential foods have skyrocketed after billions of dollars worth of crops were destroyed by the flood waters.

As the reports of the disaster unfolded in front of us, we were overwhelmed by its magnitude and the destruction, chaos and misery it has left behind. The images of hundreds of thousands of Pakistani citizens living in makeshift camps or by the side of the road soaking up monsoon rains and surviving on handouts haunts our thoughts and cannot leave us indifferent. There is an urgent need to mobilize our efforts to provide all possible assistance to the Pakistani people whose lives have been destroyed by the flood. When the flood waters recede, millions of farmers who contribute significantly to propelling Pakistan's economy face an uncertain future.

Now is the time to show our solidarity with the people of Pakistan. And it is in this spirit of solidarity with the Government and the people and Pakistan that

the Government of Mauritius, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, decided on 6 August 2010, to contribute the sum of $300,000 to the reconstruction process. Moreover, a flash appeal telethon will also be organized by the municipality of the city of Port-Louis on 26 August 2010, to channel the eagerness of the Mauritian population to contribute financially and in kind to the global effort to assist the people of Pakistan to get back on their feet as quickly as possible after this disaster.

The history of Pakistan is replete with periods of intense challenges, but the Pakistani people have always faced those difficult situations with boldness and have rebounded with dignity. In the face of such exemplary courage, it is incumbent on the international community to stand by Pakistan, to whom we wish "bon courage".

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria): At the outset, let me join other delegations in expressing gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for having convened these plenary meetings of the Assembly, beginning on World Humanitarian Day, to consider the humanitarian situation resulting from the devastating floods in Pakistan.

I should like to take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for his efforts to mobilize the United Nations and the international community to move as fast as they can to deliver the assistance that is needed. I should also like to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, for his statement yesterday on the scale of the destruction and other consequences caused by the severe flooding that has adversely affected his country.

Algeria is deeply saddened by the loss of life and the suffering of the Pakistani population. On this occasion, my delegation extends its deepest condolences to the families of those who have died, been injured or lost their homes and possessions. We are here today to share our sympathy and solidarity with the people and the Government of Pakistan at this difficult juncture. I would like to echo Mr. Treki's call to the international community to address the urgent needs in Pakistan.

As far as Algeria is concerned, I would like to announce that my Government has already expressed its solidarity with Pakistan and has provided the Pakistani authorities in Islamabad with the amount of $1 million in emergency aid.

I should like to conclude by expressing our strong hope that this meeting will reinforce the generous support of the international community for the Government and the people of Pakistan in both the emergency and reconstruction phases.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations A/64/PV.112

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

112nd plenary meeting
Friday, 20 August 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Acharya (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 70 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Tarawneh (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab Group in New York, I would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of Pakistan, reasserting our full solidarity and sympathy with our brothers and sisters in Pakistan for the disaster that has stricken them, namely the devastating floods that have displaced millions of men, women and children and have spread diseases and epidemics.

We would like to associate ourselves with previous speakers in stressing the need to stand by the people and the Government of Pakistan and to assist them in dealing with this disaster. We would like to express our appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for convening these important meetings, and we reaffirm our full support for resolution 64/294, entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the wake of devastating floods in Pakistan". We would also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his visit to Pakistan to see for himself the scope of the disaster that has stricken the country. We would like to reaffirm our full support for the United Nations as it assists Pakistan in dealing with this crisis.

The floods that have swept across Pakistan are the worst in its history. They have caused more devastation than the tsunami that swept across South-East Asia in 2004, the earthquake that struck Pakistan in 2005 or the earthquake that hit Haiti recently. This means that it is impossible for Pakistan to deal with the crisis alone, particularly since the devastation in the wake of the floods has affected 20 million people and covered vast areas of the country.

We would like to call upon the international community and all donors to provide immediate emergency relief and assistance to Pakistan and to remain committed to providing further assistance later on for reconstruction and for rebuilding infrastructure that has been destroyed.

We would like to reassert our commitment to providing medium- and long-term assistance to Pakistan. That commitment is based on our keen interest in standing by our brothers, sisters and friends all over the world in times of crisis.

In our national capacity, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has provided assistance that includes a medical team and other specialized teams to deal with water-borne diseases. These teams will be further enhanced in the future. We would like to stress the importance of dealing with endemic and epidemic

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diseases and of vaccinating the population against cholera, polio and other diseases that spread in such crises.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Pierre (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I wish to express my gratitude to the President of the Assembly for convening these plenary meetings, beginning on World Humanitarian Day, to consider the humanitarian situation in Pakistan following the recent flooding that has battered that friendly country. My delegation welcomes the consensus adoption of resolution 64/294, calling for the strengthening of emergency aid for Pakistan and its reconstruction.

Furthermore, my delegation aligns itself with the statements made yesterday by the representatives of Yemen, Suriname and Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Caribbean Community and the Non-Aligned Movement, respectively.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan following the most destructive flooding in the history of the country. The floods have caused hundreds of deaths, millions of other victims and heavy material damage, with a particular impact on the country's infrastructure and agriculture.

The people and the Government of Haiti remember the assistance Pakistan provided to them following the earthquake of 12 January 2010. Although Haiti is still encountering considerable problems in rebuilding, more than eight months after one of the most deadly and destructive natural disasters in human history, my country wishes to express its solidarity with the Government and the people of Pakistan.

It is important to note that within a relatively short period of time, a number of countries have been affected — some more than others — by natural disasters. Because of developing countries' fragile situation, in particular due to their lack of resources, they have not been able to effectively deal with the consequences that such disasters have on human life and the environment. As a result, they require the solidarity of the international community.

The international community has been at my country's side, providing emergency humanitarian assistance and promising to help with its reconstruction. Similarly, together with the Government of Pakistan, the international community has endeavoured to come to the aid of the people of Pakistan. My delegation welcomes such gestures and calls upon the international community to continue those efforts in order to resolve the situation in Pakistan.

Finally, my delegation would like to say to the Government and people of Pakistan that the people and the Government of Haiti are keeping them in their thoughts.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Pálsson (Iceland): The catastrophic events that have devastated up to 20 million people and claimed the lives of more than 1,600 in Pakistan are among the most dramatic of their kind in living memory. I take this opportunity to express the sincere condolences and the deepest sympathy of my Government to the Government and the people of Pakistan for the loss of life and the harrowing human suffering there. We pledge ourselves fully to supporting the international relief effort now under way and welcome the adoption yesterday of resolution 64/294.

In response to the humanitarian emergency in Pakistan, my Government has decided to release $125,000 to the World Food Programme and to allocate an additional $64,000 to various non-governmental organizations. The Icelandic Red Cross has disbursed funds in the amount of $28,000 and fundraising efforts among the Icelandic public have been launched by the Red Cross and UNICEF.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Mero (United Republic of Tanzania): The United Republic of Tanzania welcomes the comprehensive briefings made by the President of the Assembly and the Secretary-General, His Excellency Ban Ki-moon. We also thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs Qureshi for his briefing.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group.

We also welcome and commend the commitment expressed and assistance offered to the people of Pakistan to mitigate the effects of this human tragedy.

It is encouraging to learn that the Secretary-General has taken the initiative to visit Pakistan to see for himself the extent of the damage that has been inflicted upon the people of Pakistan.

The Government and the people of the United Republic of Tanzania express their deepest sorrow at the tragedy of the severe floods and rains that have beset Pakistan and caused such tremendous human loss, infrastructure damage and displacement of the population. We welcome the adoption of resolution 64/294.

The Government and the people of Tanzania offer moral support to all efforts, as requested by the Secretary-General, that will lead to solutions to this challenge. We encourage all forms of support that may help the country to return to its normal way of life and supplement national efforts. We call upon the international community to do everything in its power to augment the current efforts and prevent opportunistic entities from taking undue advantage of this crisis. Indeed, the people of Pakistan should not be left alone.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Maldives.

Mr. Mohamed (Maldives): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Maldives.

As the most representative and universal international body, the United Nations has an important role to play as Pakistan faces this unprecedented natural disaster, which has caused tragic loss of life, enormous damage and tremendous suffering. I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the United Nations entities for their efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people affected by the floods in Pakistan.

I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, for having convened this judicious, timely and necessary meeting to consider the humanitarian situation in Pakistan.

My delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement delivered by Yemen on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

As Pakistan combats this disaster — one of the gravest the international community has encountered, with a scale of destruction of unprecedented proportions — I would like to express our solidarity with and convey our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of Pakistan. We share in the grief of the affected families, and we express our heartfelt sympathy and support to those who have lost so much as a result of this colossal catastrophe. We see the suffering of the brave Pakistani people, yet struggle to comprehend the enormity of the tragedy that has befallen their country.

As a gesture of solidarity and sympathy, my Government has already pledged a sum of 3 million Pakistani rupees towards the relief efforts being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan. In addition, both the President and the Vice-President of Maldives have called on all Maldivian people to be forthcoming and generous in extending all assistance possible to our brothers and sisters in Pakistan in their hour of greatest need.

What is unfolding in Pakistan is a reminder of the alarming frequency and ferocity of natural disasters and that we may be facing a world where natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change, will drive millions of people from their homes, threaten lives and livelihoods, and destroy environments. The consequences of these disasters are particularly devastating in developing countries, mainly due to the lack of resources, the long-lasting consequences for affected populations and the adverse impacts on the livelihoods of millions of people, which are compounded by a lack of coping mechanisms.

We acknowledge efforts being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan for the rescue and relief of the affected population, in cooperation with the international community. We also recognize that these efforts must be intensified with substantial international support — immediate, short-term and long-term — to address the immediate response as well as the long-term concerns.

These meetings, convened beginning on World Humanitarian Day and during the holy month of Ramadan, are a call for resolute action, to act immediately and with determination, in line with our universal humanitarian beliefs to save lives, ease suffering and ensure the human dignity of the people of Pakistan. We call on the international community to open their hearts and to be generous in their deeds to help ease the suffering of the Pakistani people. We hope and pray that the people of Pakistan will be able to cope with this massive disaster. We wish for strength

for the bereaved families who have lost their loved ones.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): We are grateful to His Excellency Ali Abdussalam Treki, President of the Assembly, for having convened these meetings, which began yesterday on a very special day, World Humanitarian Day, in order for us to gain a fuller understanding of the gravity of the floods, their devastation, the admirable determination of the Pakistani people to fight them and the solidarity of the international community with Pakistan. We thank His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, for his prompt visit to the field, his role in coordinating the international relief efforts and his briefing.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and Cambodia on behalf of the Asian Group.

As a nation that has experienced frequent and highly destructive natural calamities in recent years, we wish to express our deepest condolences and sympathy to the people and the Government of Pakistan for the phenomenal and horrendous human and material suffering and loss.

While we are making an initial symbolic financial contribution to Pakistani victims, at the same time, we pay tribute to the courage, endurance and resilience of the Pakistani people and Government in stemming the floods, taking care of the immediate needs of those affected and preparing for future eventualities.

We appreciate the solidarity, cooperation and assistance extended to the Pakistani people by the international community, especially through the adoption of resolution 64/294 yesterday and the pledges and commitments made during the course of these meetings. We fully share the common belief that effective solutions to the consequences of the disaster will have to take into account both the immediate and long-term economic, social and environmental implications of the disaster.

Finally, let me reiterate the Vietnamese Government's commitment to humanitarian operations and its readiness to continue to join the United Nations and the international community at large in working with the Pakistani people and Government to best cope with this disaster and to ensure early recovery and sustainable post-disaster development for that brotherly country.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Ebner (Austria): Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of the Austrian Government, our condolences to the people and the Government of Pakistan following the tragic loss of life in the monsoon floods.

Austria associates itself with the statement made by Belgium yesterday on behalf of the European Union.

As many speakers have said before me, a disaster of this magnitude demands a global response with the United Nations at its centre. Austria is currently finalizing a humanitarian aid package in response to this crisis that will amount, in total, to approximately €5 million. This humanitarian assistance will be channelled through the United Nations, the International Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations. Once again, we express our deepest solidarity with the people and the Government of Pakistan.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Jilani (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): I would like first to express, on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), our deepest condolences and sympathies to the people and the Government of Pakistan for the loss of life and human suffering caused by the ongoing flooding.

As underlined by previous speakers, the devastating flooding is unprecedented and requires a massive and immediate response. The IFRC Field Assessment and Coordination Team is coordinating with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society to conduct a detailed assessment. This assessment is contributing to the design of a multi-sector plan of action to address the affected population's urgent needs for relief, emergency health services and shelter, as well as longer-term recovery needs, including the restoration of livelihoods.

In recognition of the magnitude of the disaster and the growing needs of the affected population, we are significantly scaling up our operation. In a revised appeal issued yesterday in support of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, the IFRC outlined a plan to provide humanitarian assistance to over 900,000 people over a period of 18 months. This emergency appeal for $73.6 million more than quadruples our preliminary appeal.

The emergency appeal will support the implementation of emergency relief distribution of both food and non-food items, the provision of emergency shelter and support for owner-driven reconstruction of houses, the delivery of health services, the provision of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene promotion, and early recovery support through livelihood interventions for 150,000 families.

The Secretary-General of the IFRC, who visited Pakistan last week, confirmed that:

> "This is one of the worst disasters I have ever witnessed. Millions of people need help, and we must all work together to meet the huge challenges that lie before us."

Coordination among humanitarian actors is essential. As an auxiliary to the Government, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society has a long-standing relationship with the National Disaster Management Authority and liaises closely with the provincial and district-level disaster management authorities. The IFRC, Pakistan Red Crescent Society and partner national Societies are also coordinating with other humanitarian organizations, including through the cluster system.

The Movement partners, including IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross, have been working in Pakistan for decades. A number of partner national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, including the Turkish Red Crescent, the Saudi Red Crescent, the Qatar Red Crescent, the Kuwait Red Crescent, the Iranian Red Crescent, the German Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and the American Red Cross, have already an ongoing operation in Pakistan.

It is imperative to use the occasion to highlight the dramatic increase in extreme weather events and their humanitarian impact. We have joined many others on so many occasions to emphasize the need to address that impact on the most vulnerable, to invest in disaster risk reduction, to enhance preparedness and to build community resilience.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the call made by so many speakers yesterday and today to collectively commit to meeting the immediate humanitarian needs of the affected population and to planning for the longer-term recovery.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/30 of 19 November 2002, I now call on the observer for the Asian Development Bank.

Mr. MacCormac (Asian Development Bank): May I begin, on behalf of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), by extending our deepest sympathies to the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani people who have been affected by this terrible disaster.

The flooding in Pakistan is a catastrophe of epic proportions. The sheer number of individuals affected by this tragedy, 20 million, is almost incomprehensible. About 6 million of these need urgent relief and shelter support. Beyond the initial relief efforts now under way, Pakistan faces a long and hard road to recovery. Schools, health centres, roads, water supply facilities, power, houses and transmission lines need to be rebuilt and repaired. Two million hectares of crops are underwater, posing a major threat to food security.

The recovery effort must be well-coordinated at all levels, beginning with the damage and needs assessment. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have been asked to lead this assessment in close cooperation with the Government of Pakistan, the United Nations and other partners. The Asian Development Bank already has an advance team of staff on the ground, which will increase to 100 staff in the next few days. A high-level team is in Islamabad for initial consultations.

ADB will lead the damage and needs assessment in seven sectors: public administration, transport and communication, energy, irrigation, water and sanitation, health and social protection. The Asian Development Bank will also lead in designing the overall implementation arrangements for the reconstruction efforts.

The recovery will, of course, require a huge financial commitment from all development partners. I am privileged to inform the Assembly that the Asian

Development Bank's support for reconstruction over the next two years will be at least $2 billion. We also plan to establish and administer a special trust fund to provide a vehicle for other development partners to channel their contributions for reconstruction support. To meet urgent relief needs, the Asian Development Bank has also approved a grant of $3 million from the Asia Pacific Disaster Response Fund.

The future of 20 million Pakistani people depends on our decisive, substantial and effective assistance. The Asian Development Bank has significant experience and expertise in helping developing Asian countries to recover and rebuild following natural disasters, including such catastrophes as the 2005 Pakistan earthquake and the 2004 Asian tsunami. We, at the Asian Development Bank, are firmly committed to play our leadership role in the immense job that lies ahead, in close collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and other development partners.

The Acting President: Having heard the statements from the Member States and the Observers, I now have the pleasure of giving the floor to His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): I take the floor as we complete two days of hearing from all our friends around the world.

When on 28 July we started sounding out Members here as to the unfolding catastrophe in Pakistan, we were very worried, as there was scepticism, and initial responses spoke more of a trust deficit than of actual answers to the unfolding tragedy.

Over the past three weeks, there have been millions and millions of casualties. Today, as three more districts have come under water, the figure is no longer 20 million: it ought to be closer to 22 million. As the river rampages on its path towards the sea, I would like first and foremost to thank the President of the General Assembly, who flew back post-haste, despite his age, and convened these plenary meetings of the Assembly. Despite his not being too well, he sat with us most of yesterday, and his concern as to what is happening in Pakistan was in many ways solace to us, showing that people cared that much. I would like to thank the President for his very deep interest in the welfare of the oft-forgotten common man, not only in Pakistan, but anywhere in world. We pray for his early recovery, as he is not well.

The Secretary-General has played a yeoman's role. He stood up and got himself counted when perhaps other world leaders were talking in deficit terms, so to speak. He did not wait in the face of scepticism. He addressed himself to the problem. He not only addressed himself to the problem; as he saw it getting worse — before it got completely out of hand — he went down to Pakistan on very short notice, an 18-hour trip. He himself then spent the whole day touring areas where millions and millions waited for hope. He carried, on behalf of the United Nations, a beacon of hope.

He not only carried a beacon of hope. He came back and addressed the matter immediately. He started calling upon the world not to wake up to scepticism, but to step up to the plate and realize that this is one of the greatest calamities ever to befall mankind. Perhaps in terms of numbers, of those who have lost homes and are displaced, it is one of the great natural disasters of history, which will be recorded in the red blood that has flowed since the tragedy began.

In fact, a lot of people have asked why there have been only 1,500 fatalities. I remind them that the figure of 1,500 relates to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, in the north. Subsequently, when the river swelled to over 100 kilometres in width, there was no means of going into that river and counting the dead. And we do not know yet how many have perished. When a river expands from one kilometre to 100, one can imagine how access will be denied to anyone trying to enter those realms. So, we can only hold our breath and hope that the casualty figures have been lower than feared.

I want now to speak of the very, very strong message that the Assembly has sent to the world. Over two days, more than 70 representatives spoke, giving us, by their words and their deeds and their support, more hope than I can describe: there are not enough words in my vocabulary to thank them. All those who stood at this rostrum talked about their strong support for the poor people of Pakistan, and that was solace indeed as well.

We thank all participants. We thank the entire Assembly and its membership. We thank the world, and we have absolutely no hesitation in saying this. To some who asked me yesterday whether we have accepted our neighbour's help, I am proud to say that we have, because something like this transcends

anything, certainly politics. I am glad that the Prime Minister and the people of Pakistan accepted from our neighbours not only the solace of their Government and their people but the support that they have envisaged and announced here, as well as bilaterally between the two countries.

This is a time when all of us, the children of Adam, must rise to the occasion. Such a calamity forces great changes in history, and politics cannot stand up to them. These are the disasters that change the destiny and course of nations, and there is a long road ahead.

I am indeed grateful for the role played by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). And I am very, very pleased that the last statement delivered from this rostrum was that of the representative of the Asian Development Bank, which has taken upon itself the assessment of damage. And, going beyond the initial stage, his words about raising $2 billion for Pakistan's needs in what is considered an initial response to the damage are indeed heartening. I know it is going to be much more than that, but that is a good beginning.

To those in the world who say that the United Nations does not do anything, I say, "Come to Pakistan". Within 48 hours, the United Nations made itself available through help from the World Food Programme, from the United Nations Population Fund, from UNICEF, from the United Nations Development Programme and from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees. Come to us and see what they are doing. There are over 200 people — with 100 more coming, for a total of 300 — providing leadership everywhere and trying to reach people. Come to us, where it can be seen how in this Hall we have created hope. Come to us where we can see that affiliate associates like the ICRC, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are giving and providing hope. The message from here to the people of Pakistan is: "Do not give up hope".

It is difficult; it will take time. But we have the community of the world standing with us. The comity of nations represented in this Hall will not let any part of the world down. That is the legacy of the Ban Ki-moon era in this particular institution, and it should be remembered for its compassion. We in Asia feel proud that this compassion is echoed from within our ranks and from our part of the world.

With that, even to the sceptics, who have now joined ranks, I say, "Thank you". We hope their scepticism produces more transparency in the handling of this whole process. One of the great answers regarding transparency is that the United Nations is spearheading the effort and is integrated with the agencies in Pakistan. I am sure that their oversight will not be any less than that of any other institution in the world.

I thank the President of the General Assembly, I thank the members and their representatives and I thank the entire staff of the United Nations. I thank the world for listening.

The Acting President: I thank the Permanent Representative of Pakistan for his statement. I also would like to take note of the special appreciation he expressed to the President of the General Assembly as well as to the Secretary-General and the Member States and observers whose representatives spoke here over the past two days. I would also like to reciprocate his sentiments, when he said that the United Nations has truly given an integrated response and came to the rescue of Pakistan immediately, which will be an example for situations in many other countries as well.

On behalf of the President of the General Assembly, I should like to thank Member States for their active participation in these deliberations. They have all demonstrated your solidarity and sympathy with the people of Pakistan, and our discussions and its outcome have provided a framework for mobilizing international support and assistance.

I think in the two days of our meetings here, we saw and we heard a profusion of goodwill and solidarity with the Government and the people of Pakistan in this hour of grief and hour of need. All have applauded the resilience of the Pakistani people and have wished for their speedy recovery. There was also a general understanding that there is a need for stronger global support and assistance to deal with these unprecedented and catastrophic floods in Pakistan.

With these words, the Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 70.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.

United Nations A/64/PV.113

General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

113rd plenary meeting
Wednesday, 25 August 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Guido de Marco, President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, and His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi, President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Before we take up the items on our agenda for this morning, it is my sad duty to inform members of the Assembly of the passing on 12 August 2010 of His Excellency Guido de Marco, former President of Malta and President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, as well as the passing on 20 August 2010 of our dear brother, His Excellency Samir Shihabi, former diplomat of Saudi Arabia and President the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

I had the honour of knowing the two former Presidents of the General Assembly, whose friendship and association I value deeply and will continue to cherish and remember always.

His Excellency Professor Guido de Marco was born in Malta in 1931 and led a remarkable life of dedication and service to both his country and the international community. Professor de Marco was elected President of Malta in 1999, and also held the titles of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs. He will be remembered, among many things, for his leadership in promoting Euro-Mediterranean dialogue for the enhancement of regional security and cooperation.

As President of the General Assembly, Professor De Marco initiated dialogue on the revitalization of the General Assembly, an objective that continues to be of critical importance to the United Nations today.

On behalf of all Member States, and on my own account, I should like to convey heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of the late Professor De Marco and to the people and the Government of Malta.

His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi was born in Jerusalem in 1925. He had a long and distinguished career in foreign policy and diplomacy. He began working for the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1949 and held diplomatic posts including in Turkey, Switzerland, Somalia, Italy and Pakistan. In 1983, Mr. Shihabi was appointed as Saudi Arabia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. As President of the General Assembly, Mr. Shihabi made an outstanding contribution to the Organization and its progress towards achieving the purposes of the Charter. Mr. Shihabi was also the founder of the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly.

On behalf of all Member States and on my own account, I should like to convey heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of the late Mr. Shihabi and to the people and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silence in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Professor Guido de Marco, President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, and His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi, President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: It is always sad to mount this podium to mourn the passing of a former colleague. Today's memorial is especially poignant as we pay tribute to two men who played important roles here in this great Hall. They left their marks in consecutive years, at the forty-fifth and forty-fifth sessions of the General Assembly. They helped to steer us through a time of transition for the world and for the United Nations. For that, and much else, we remember them with great fondness and admiration.

Long before I became Secretary-General, our paths crossed, at least in a manner of speaking. It was 1991. I was working in my country's Foreign Ministry. In May of that year, as President of the General Assembly, Guido de Marco visited Seoul and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of efforts towards United Nations membership for both States. Then, four months later, on His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi's first day as President of the General Assembly, the flags of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were raised here for the first time.

Of course, the careers of both men encompassed far more than matters involving the Korean peninsula. Guido de Marco was not just a former President of the General Assembly; he also served as President of his country, the capstone of a long career in public service. He led Malta into the European Union and sought to ensure that his country played an active role in international affairs. I know from my own visit to Malta last year the high regard in which he was held. At this time of loss, my thoughts and prayers are with his family and with the people of Malta.

I also offer my condolences to the family of the late Samir Shihabi and to the people of Saudi Arabia. In addition to his outstanding diplomatic service to his country, Mr. Shihabi was a dynamic presence here at United Nations Headquarters, not least because of his trademark walking sticks. As his country's Permanent Representative for nearly a decade and as President of the General Assembly, he contributed across our agenda, including to the revitalization of the Assembly itself. He will also be remembered for founding the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly and the International Association of Permanent Representatives. I benefited greatly from his vision and experience and always looked forward to his company.

We are full of sorrow today, but we also recognize the tremendous good they did for us and among us. I hope that legacy is at least some solace to all those touched by this loss.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Sea (Cambodia): On behalf of all members of the Group of Asian States, I would like to extend our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Malta on the demise of Professor Guido de Marco, the late President of Malta. Our condolences go also to the bereaved family of the late President during this time of loss.

Professor Guido de Marco will be remembered by the peoples of the world as a great statesman. Well known for his strong political abilities and for his remarkable performance throughout his long career, his name will go down in history as being that of the distinguished person who brought about Malta's membership in the European Union.

During his tenure at the United Nations as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, in 1990-1991, Professor Guido de Marco was actively involved in the revitalization of the General Assembly and other aspects of reform of our world Organization. Furthermore, he played a crucial role in the admission to the United Nations of three important States of our Asian Group today, namely, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Korea.

The Group of Asian States is also deeply saddened to learn that Ambassador Samir Shihabi, the President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, passed away five days ago, on Friday, 20 August. On behalf of the Group, I would like to convey our profound condolences to the Government and the people of Saudi Arabia, as well as to the members of the late President's family.

Ambassador Samir Shihabi was a long-serving and skilful diplomat in the foreign service of Saudi Arabia. After many diplomatic assignments, he was appointed Permanent Representative of his country to the United Nations in 1983 and was elected President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, in 1991. He was the founder of the International Association of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations and was twice elected as President of that organization. He will be remembered by all delegates and Permanent Representatives to the United Nations for this very important contribution.

Before I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to express, once again, on behalf of the Group of Asian States, our most sincere condolences and deepest sympathies to the families of the late Presidents of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth and forty-sixth sessions, as well as to the peoples of their countries, Malta and Saudi Arabia.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): As Chairman of the Eastern European Group for the month of August, I have the sad duty of extending our heartfelt condolences at the loss of two great diplomats who contributed in many capacities to the realization of the ideals and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Professor Guido de Marco was President of Malta from 1999 to 2004, following appointments as Minister of the Interior and Justice, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister. During his tenure, Professor De Marco introduced several bills in the House of Representatives intended to incorporate important conventions, including the European Convention on Human Rights, into domestic law. As Minister for Foreign Affairs he submitted Malta's application for membership of the European Community in Brussels. In 1990, Professor de Marco was elected President of the General Assembly for its forty-fifth session. During that time he initiated a dialogue that revitalized the Organization and introduced other aspects of necessary reform during a time of transition in international relations. His efforts were in many cases instrumental in the adoption of important resolutions of the General Assembly dealing with a wide array of issues.

Mr. Samir Shihabi, who served as Professor De Marco's successor, had been for many years the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations. He also played a leading role in establishing the International Association of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations and was twice elected President of the Association. As a lifelong diplomat, Mr. Shihabi participated as Chairman, Vice-Chairman or member of delegation of Saudi Arabia to numerous United Nations and other international conferences, including those of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 developing nations. As President of the General Assembly, Mr. Shihabi played an outstanding role in the Organization and made a major contribution towards the achievement of the objectives set forth in the Charter.

We extend our sincerest sympathy to the families, friends and home countries of these excellent diplomats. The entire United Nations community mourns the loss of two good friends and very efficient former Presidents of the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States in tribute to the memory of His Excellency Mr. Guido de Marco and His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi, Presidents of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth and forty-sixth session, respectively.

To be a President of the General Assembly is to belong to a select and rarefied group of international leaders. Were it possible to assemble all of the General Assembly Presidents past and present, they would not even fill one third of the Hall that we now occupy. These distinguished men and women have all had the singular honour and tremendous responsibility to guide and shape the deliberations of the world's pre-eminent multilateral institution, and each has made an indelible mark on the history of our global village.

It is fitting today that we jointly pay tribute to Presidents De Marco and Shihabi. They were linked in time, not only because one succeeded the other as President, but also because of the times in which they presided. Two decades ago, we were at the dawn of a new era in international relations, when the duopoly of the cold war stasis gave way to the multipolar, multifaceted world in which we now live.

Presidents De Marco and Shihabi were instrumental in guiding the United Nations through those first uncertain moments and in ushering in a new dawn in multilateralism and international cooperation. There could scarcely have been two individuals better suited to their tremendous task at that momentous point in history.

His Excellency President De Marco, a lawyer, diplomat, Foreign Minister and later President of Malta, was a man of such towering importance in his own land that his General Assembly presidency counts as but a chapter in a storied political career. But along with his historic triumphs as a leader in Malta, we must also remember his sterling contributions to this body and to international relations.

His Excellency President Shihabi, also a lawyer, intellect and peerless diplomat, was a pivotal figure in revitalizing and re-energizing the General Assembly. His creation of the Council of Presidents of the General Assembly is testament to his devotion and to his service to the international community. His distinctive presence is also a matter of United Nations lore.

The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States extends its deepest condolences to the families of Presidents De Marco and Shihabi and to the peoples of Malta and Saudi Arabia. We honour the memory of these titans. May their achievements and examples live on in history.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. McNee (Canada): On behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States, I would like to join others in extending to the peoples and the Governments of Malta and Saudi Arabia our deepest condolences on the deaths of President Guido de Marco and His Excellency Ambassador Samir Shihabi. Both were very important figures in their own countries and are fondly remembered for their tireless work in advancing the ideals of the United Nations as Presidents of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth and forty-sixth sessions, respectively.

President De Marco was a distinguished Maltese politician, who served as President of Malta from 1999 to 2004 and who worked tirelessly throughout his career to promote Maltese cooperation with the international community. This included his term as President of the General Assembly in 1990 and his having presided over the accession of Malta to the European Union in 2004. As Ambassador Treki has noted, when President De Marco was President of the General Assembly, he began the important process of revitalization of the Assembly. Following his retirement as President he continued to promote these international ideals through his work as Chairman of the Commonwealth Foundation.

After a very distinguished career as Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Turkey, Somalia and Pakistan, Ambassador Samir Shihabi was appointed as Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations in 1983 and was then elected to serve as President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. As Assembly President, Ambassador Shihabi skilfully oversaw a remarkable transition in the membership of the United Nations, helping to ensure the admission of 20 new Member States in an orderly fashion. On a more personal note, I understand that in his last days he enjoyed living in his country home in Portugal, where he took great pleasure in raising bees and producing honey for his friends.

The members of the Group of Western European and Other States offer our gratitude for what those distinguished statesmen gave to the United Nations and offer our sympathies and condolences to their families. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of all members of the General Assembly, I shall send letters of condolences to Malta and Saudi Arabia.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Malta.

Mr. Borg (Malta): May I first of all, Mr. President, extend the appreciation of my delegation for your initiative to convene the General Assembly to honour two of your predecessors, the Presidents of the

Assembly at its forty-fifth and forty-sixth session. I thank you and the Secretary-General for your words of tribute in memory of Professor Guido de Marco, former President of Malta, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairs of the regional groups for their statements on behalf of the States Members of the Organization. The messages of sympathy and sorry delivered today will be transmitted to the immediate family of Professor De Marco, as well as to the Government and the people of Malta.

Malta has indeed lost a true statesman who loved his country dearly. Professor De Marco was a strong believer in the United Nations, and his legacy as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session will long be cherished by the international community.

May I also take this opportunity to extend Malta's sympathy and profound condolences to the family of the former President of the General Assembly Samir Shihabi.

It seems that destiny wanted one to follow the other in presiding over the General Assembly and for one to hand the gavel to the other. Destiny again played its card when these two eminent personalities went on to the next world, one following the other. May God grant them eternal rest.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Al Oyaidi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of Saudi Arabia, I should like, Mr. President, to express to you and to the Secretary-General our thanks for your words of condolence on the death of Mr. Samir Shihabi. He served his country, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and we trust that today he has found rest.

We wish also to express our condolences to the people of Malta on the death of former President Guido de Marco.

I thank the representatives of the regional groups who have offered their condolences.

Agenda item 7 (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly has before it document A/64/896*, under sub-item (c) of agenda item 111, entitled "Election of thirty members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law". Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 111 at its 82nd plenary meeting, on 15 April 2010.

In order to enable the General Assembly to consider sub-item (c) of agenda item 111 it will be necessary to reopen consideration of that sub-item. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to reopen consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 111 (*continued*)

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections

(c) Election of thirty members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

Letter dated 24 August 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/64/896*)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now proceed to a by-election to elect one member of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. Members will recall that at its 35th and 82nd plenary meetings, held on 3 November 2009 and 15 April 2010 respectively, the General Assembly elected 30 members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a six-year term of office beginning on 21 June 2010.

I would now like to draw the attention of members to document A/64/896*, containing a letter dated 24 August 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Belarus to the United Nations announcing that Belarus would like to relinquish its seat on the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) in favour of

Georgia, on the last day prior to the beginning of the forty-fourth session of the Commission in June 2011.

As a result, a vacancy will occur and a new member must therefore be elected to fill the unexpired term of office of Belarus, commencing in June 2011, the first day of the forty-fourth session of the Commission. The President has been informed that the Group of Eastern European States has endorsed Georgia as the candidate for the one vacancy.

As members are aware, in accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations. However, I should like to recall paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, whereby the practice of dispensing with the secret ballot for elections to subsidiary organs when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled should become standard, unless a delegation specifically requests a vote on a given election.

In the absence of such a request, may I take it that the Assembly decides to proceed to the election on that basis?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to declare Georgia elected a member of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law for a term of office beginning in June 2011, on the first day of the forty-fourth session of the Commission?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate Georgia on its election as a member of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

(f) Election of the Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

Note by the Secretary-General (A/64/897)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): As stated in the Secretary-General's note (A/64/897), the General Assembly, in its resolution 56/206 of 21 December 2001, decided that the secretariat of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) should be headed by an Executive Director at the level of Under-Secretary-General, to be elected by the Assembly for a term of four years upon nomination by the Secretary-General after consultation with Member States.

In the light of those provisions of General Assembly resolution 56/206, the Secretary-General nominates Mr. Joan Clos (Spain) for election by the Assembly as Executive Director of UN-Habitat, at the level of Under-Secretary-General, for a term of office of four years beginning on 18 October 2010 and ending on 17 October 2014.

Accordingly, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to elect Mr. Joan Clos as Executive Director of UN-Habitat for a term of office of four years, beginning on 18 October 2010 and ending on 17 October 2014?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-item (f) of agenda item 111?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.

United Nations A/64/PV.114

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

114th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 31 August 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Announcement regarding the results of the election of the Chairpersons of the Main Committees

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Before proceeding further, I wish to make an announcement concerning the membership of the General Committee of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Members will recall that, for the sixty-fifth session, the President, the 21 Vice-Presidents and the Chairpersons of the First Committee, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Second, Fifth and Sixth Committees were elected on 11 June 2010. There remained the election of the Chairperson of the Third Committee to take place at a later date. Also, the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations, who was appointed Chairperson of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), has since ended his tour of duty in New York.

I should now like to inform members that, on 27 August 2010, His Excellency Mr. Chitsaka Chipaziwa of Zimbabwe and His Excellency Mr. Michel Tommo Monthe of Cameroon were elected Chairpersons of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and of the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, respectively, and are accordingly members of the General Committee for that session. I congratulate the Chairpersons of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and of the Third Committee on their election.

The Chairpersons of the six Main Committees and the 21 Vice-Presidents for the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly having been elected, the General Committee of the General Assembly for the sixty-fifth session has thus been fully constituted in accordance with rule 38 of the rules of procedure.

Agenda item 104 (*continued*)

Crime prevention and criminal justice

High-level meeting of the General Assembly to formally launch the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of agenda item 104, entitled "Crime prevention and criminal justice", in order to formally launch the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/293. Members will recall that, on 30 July 2010, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/293, which contained the Global Plan as an annex.

Today's high-level meeting will comprise this formal plenary meeting and an informal segment, to be held immediately following the adjournment of this meeting. Allow me now to make a few introductory remarks.

We meet here today to launch the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in

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10-50023 (E)

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Persons. The Plan of Action was adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 64/293 on 30 July 2010, after a broad consultative process. I would like to thank again the co-facilitators of this process, the Permanent Representatives of Cape Verde and Portugal, for their commendable efforts in facilitating the process. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for their engagement on this issue.

The Plan of Action is intended to foster concerted action to defend the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the right of all human beings to be born free and the right not to be held in slavery or servitude. The Plan of Action affirms that slavery and the slave trade are prohibited in all their forms. Fulfilling these commitments must be at the forefront of the international agenda, if we are to protect the world's population, especially the poor and most vulnerable, from human trafficking, a modern-day form of slavery.

By adopting the Plan of Action, Governments have resolved to take concrete action to prevent trafficking in persons, to protect and assist victims, to prosecute related crimes and to strengthen partnerships among Governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, including the media. Governments have also agreed to promote and consider ratifying existing international instruments related to trafficking. The Plan of Action adopts a human-rights-centred approach to efforts to prevent and combat trafficking, and agrees to mainstream the issue of trafficking into broader United Nations policies and programmes on economic and social development, human rights, the rule of law, good governance, education and natural disaster and post-conflict reconstruction. To assist victims, the Plan of Action establishes the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. I encourage Member States to contribute generously to that Fund. Governments are also urged to take all appropriate measures to ensure that victims are not penalized for being trafficked and to protect their privacy, identity and safety.

I commend all Member States for their efforts and commitment to address this urgent issue. I call on all nations and members of civil society to work together to implement the Plan of Action.

Abduction, coercion, trafficking across national and international borders and forcing women and children into sexual exploitation and servitude: this must not be accepted in today's world. As these heinous crimes flourish, thousands of men, women and children are robbed of their safety, their freedom and their dignity. Human trafficking devastates families and tears communities apart. When the history of this horror calls, we cannot let this period be remembered as one in which the global community knew but did not act.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: Today we come together to launch the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. This Plan of Action is a clarion call; the presence of all in this room is testimony to its widespread support.

I thank the facilitators — the Permanent Representatives of Portugal and Cape Verde — the President of the General Assembly and all Member States who have worked hard to build consensus. Within the United Nations system, my appreciation goes to the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, the Vienna Forum, the Blue Heart Campaign and our goodwill ambassadors. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, anti-trafficking toolkits and manuals, documentary films, public information and technical assistance have also played a part. I thank all those involved for their commitment and hard work.

Human trafficking is among the worst violations of human rights. It is slavery in the modern age. Every year, thousands of people, mainly women and children, are exploited by criminals who use them for forced labour or the sex trade. No country is immune. Almost all play a part, either as a source of trafficked people, a transit point or a destination.

Ten years ago, the world community spoke out forcefully against human trafficking when the General Assembly adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (resolution 55/25, annex II). Since then, Governments, international organizations and civil society have taken steps to stop this terrible crime against human dignity, which shames us all. But even that is not enough. To

end human trafficking in all its forms, we must take a common approach, coordinated and consistent across the globe.

The Global Plan of Action will help us to achieve exactly that. It builds on, and will strengthen, the United Nations trafficking in persons Protocol. It will engage Governments and criminal justice systems, civil society, the private sector, the media and concerned citizens. And under the Plan, the fight against human trafficking will become part of all the broader development and security policies and programmes of the United Nations.

One of the Plan's most important elements is the creation of a United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for those who are trafficked, especially women and children. The Fund aims to help Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations provide these vulnerable people with protection and support for their physical, psychological and social recovery. After they have been exploited and abused, they should not be punished too.

I urge Member States, the private sector and philanthropists to contribute generously to this Trust Fund. I also urge them to increase technical assistance to countries that support the fight against trafficking but lack financial resources and expertise. These are often countries from which people are trafficked, so their needs are especially urgent.

The Plan of Action also stresses the paramount importance of increased research, data collection and analysis of human trafficking. We must improve our knowledge and understanding of this crime if we are to make good policy decisions and targeted interventions.

The Global Plan of Action strengthens the three Ps: preventing human trafficking, prosecuting offenders and protecting victims. It also promotes a fourth critical P: partnership. The only way to end human trafficking is by working together, in partnerships between States and within regions, in partnerships within the United Nations under the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons and the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) and in public-private partnerships.

The biggest challenge to the Global Plan of Action is to reduce the numbers of people vulnerable to human trafficking. The only way to achieve this is through our work on human rights and development. This highlights the crucial importance of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and of next month's MDG summit here in New York. Empowering women, fighting discrimination, reducing poverty and keeping children healthy and out of conflict zones: the progress we are making in these respects is also helping to end human trafficking and exploitation.

But as I speak, thousands of people are living as slaves. They need our help now. With this Global Plan of Action, we have announced our steadfast commitment to stop human trafficking. I thank members for their support and urge them to turn the Plan into action.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his important statement.

Members are reminded that an informal segment will take place immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 104?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

United Nations A/64/PV.115

General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

115th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 7 September 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki ..... (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 16 (*continued*)

Question of Palestine

Letter dated 23 August 2010 from the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/64/906)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In the letter contained in document A/64/906, I have been informed of the interest of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in becoming a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. As delegations are aware, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX), of 10 November 1975, members of the Committee are appointed by the General Assembly.

The proposal before the General Assembly is for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to be included in the membership of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to the enlargement of the membership of that Committee by appointing the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as a member of the Committee?

It was so decided.

Mrs. Hernández Toledano (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I apologize for the fact that, although my Ambassador was to make this statement, he has momentarily left the Hall. I should therefore like to express Cuba's position on his behalf.

Cuba welcomes the decision just taken by the Assembly to formally endorse the inclusion of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as a full member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Cuba, which in 1975 was one of the Committee's 20 founding members, welcomes the increase in the Committee's membership. This is a clear reflection of the international growing support for the efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has historically maintained a firm position of support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, against the illegal occupation of Arab territories and in favour of an comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

We are certain that Venezuela's membership will contribute to strengthening the Committee and to its successful fulfilment of its important responsibilities. There is much to be done, and the obstacles are great. However, we trust that, sooner or later, an end will be put to the occupation of all Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and that an independent State of Palestine will be established on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Troya (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Ecuador associates itself with the statement that has just been made by the representative of Cuba. We welcome Venezuela's membership in the

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10-50685 (E)

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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people and are resolutely convinced that the sisterly republic of Venezuela will greatly contribute to the success of the Committee.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 42 (*continued*)

Report of Economic and Social Council

Draft resolution (A/64/L.55/Rev.1)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Members will recall that the Assembly held the debate on this agenda item at its 26th plenary meeting, on 27 October 2009.

I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.55/Rev.1.

Mr. Al-Aud (Yemen): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.55/Rev.1, entitled "Extension of the transition period preceding the graduation of Samoa from least developed country status".

Samoa has suffered unprecedented human and material losses as a result of the Pacific Ocean tsunami of 29 September 2009. Pursuant to the draft resolution before us, the General Assembly would decide to extend for a period of three years the transition period that Samoa is presently benefiting from among the least developed countries. The draft resolution has been negotiated by our partners, and I am happy to report that we were able to reach consensus.

Allow me to thank all delegations for their flexibility and cooperation on this issue.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/64/L.55/Rev.1, entitled "Extension of the transition period preceding the graduation of Samoa from least developed country status".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/64/L.55/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/64/L.55/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 64/295).

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position following the adoption of the resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I give the floor to the representative of Samoa.

Mr. Elisaia (Samoa): The date of 29 September 2009 will be forever etched in our national memory and conscience. That was the fateful day when part of Samoa was demolished by the deadliest natural disaster in our recorded history. The tsunami happened very fast and for the briefest of time, belying the sobering aftermath of its fury and the painful memories and harrowing stories of survivors, whose souls will be scarred for life.

One hundred and forty-three innocent lives — mainly those of women, the elderly and children — were taken unceremoniously, robbed of their human dignity and worth. Over 500 families became homeless and displaced in the wink of an eye. Costly infrastructural facilities and hard-earned public and private properties were destroyed. Suddenly, Samoa's economic outlook appeared vulnerable and its future uncertain.

In 2007, the General Assembly decided to graduate Samoa from the category of least developed country by December of this year. A year into the transition period, Samoa's economy was already experiencing severe contraction due to the global recession. It should be borne in mind that the world economic crisis and the tsunami both happened after the decision on the graduation issue had already been taken. Put simply, neither crisis was ever envisaged or predicted, and their combined impacts were never factored into the 2007 decision. Looking back at the sequence of events, it is a truism and another subtle reminder that, while man can plan and take decisions as he likes, nature cannot always be influenced or forced to comply.

The imminent end in December of Samoa's transition period out of the least developed country category, coupled with the massive reconstruction costs associated with the tsunami, which amount to about 20 per cent of Samoa's gross domestic product, our Government, not surprisingly, was obliged to bring these realities to the attention of the General Assembly and to request an extension of the transition period.

That is the genesis and backdrop to resolution 64/295. The need for an extension commensurate with the gravity of the reconstruction task at hand was

genuine and real. Fittingly, therefore, by adopting the resolution by consensus today, the Assembly has given Samoa and its people the gift of a rainbow of hope in place of the tsunami of despair. Exactly three weeks from today, the Government and people of Samoa will hold a national commemorative service to mark the first anniversary of this tragic chapter in our history. While it will be a day to mourn and pay homage to the memories of those killed by the tsunami, it will also provide a window of opportunity for thanksgiving for the rebirth of a devastated island and for the gradual triumph of the human spirit over the elements.

In the same vein, allow me to place on record Samoa's gratitude to those whose leadership and support have been crucial. Without it, today's consensus adoption of the resolution would have been in doubt. One or two in that special category need to be singled out. First, the Permanent Representative of Nepal, as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Group of Least Developed Countries, was instrumental in facilitating the Group's adoption of our draft resolution as its own. Moreover, his Mission succeeded in securing the agreement of the Group of 77 and China to support it.

Secondly, Yemen's Permanent Representative, as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, ably supported by his staff, not only took ownership of the draft resolution, but successfully negotiated it with the other groups at the United Nations to ensure that the outcome would be not a contentious one, but rather one that enjoyed unanimous support.

Thirdly, I would like to thank our development partners, who not only understood our unique challenges but gave us support when we needed it most. Other negotiating groups, whose support was equally vital to the granting of the extension, stood by us and did not let us down.

Last but not least, you and your Office, Mr. President, were sympathetic and accommodating and played a facilitating role to ensure that Samoa's priority concern would get centre-stage attention and be resolved successfully under your watch. Despite our crowded agenda at this session, your Office, together with the General Assembly Affairs Branch, prevailed so that a decision on our resolution could become part of the list of achievements of the sixty-fourth session.

We thank everyone I have mentioned and the wider membership of the United Nations for their unanimous vote of confidence and for giving Samoa much-needed space and time to ensure that our smooth transition will ultimately lead to a durable and sustainable graduation out of the category of least developed countries in about three years.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position following the adoption of the resolution.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 42?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 14

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/819)

Draft resolution (A/64/L.62)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.62.

Mr. Lomaia (Georgia): Today, I would like to introduce draft resolution A/64/L.62 on the right of Georgia's internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to finally return to their homes in a safe and dignified manner.

Over the course of the past 17 years, more than 400,000 people have been driven from the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia. Their homes have been destroyed or sold off and their families and communities torn apart. Despite countless calls by the international community and the tireless efforts of the Government of Georgia, those men, women and children have been prevented from returning to their homes.

All told, IDPs represent a staggering 75 per cent of the pre-war population of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. It is a testament to the indomitable nature of the human spirit that today they continue to live in hope of a better future. The length of time away from their homes and their lands has not diminished their desire to see them again. Each and every one carries a dream in his or her heart of returning to their roots and to the soil that nurtured

generations of their ancestors, and to share all that with their children. Any of us would feel exactly the same sense of passionate loss if were we in a similar situation.

The displaced are of various ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including Armenian, Estonian, Georgian, Greek and Ukrainian. Among them are Christians, Muslims and Jews. There are at least two things that unite all of them. The first is the fact that they have lived, worked and loved in the same cities and villages. They are attached to those places by unbreakable, enduring emotional and spiritual bonds. They are also bound by their common experience as victims of brutal ethnic cleansing — a fact that has been established, confirmed and condemned by most credible international bodies, including this one.

This is not the first time that we have introduced this draft resolution. Over the past three years, representatives gathered here have become acquainted with the details surrounding the troubles of Georgia's IDPs and refugees. Since the adoption of a similar resolution last year (resolution 63/307), the situation on the ground has not changed. IDPs and refugees are still unable to return. Some continue to live in collective shelters, and others with their relatives. Despite the efforts of the Government to fully reintegrate them into society, challenges and pain remain.

Only a very brave few have managed to return to their homes. Spontaneous returns have occurred only in places immediately adjacent to the occupation line. Those courageous souls continue to suffer the fear of insecurity and inequality, living under the threat of expulsion, forced conscription, passportization, losing their ethnic identity and the denial of their right to education in their mother tongue. Moreover, the authorities in effective control have taken measures that deprive those individuals of the right to move freely.

We strongly believe that the silent tragedy of those people provides ample cause for the General Assembly to again consider this issue. In that context, in his recent report, Mr. Walter Kälin, Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights for Internally Displaced Persons, urges all parties to

> "take all necessary steps to ensure persons displaced by the recent and past conflicts are able to enjoy their right to return voluntarily to their former homes in safety and dignity" (*A/HRC/13/21/Add.3, annex, para. 47*).

We believe that keeping this issue on the agenda of the General Assembly is one significant step towards contributing to the eventual return of the displaced persons.

An important tool provided by this draft resolution is the annual reporting by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the status of IDPs and refugees. This reporting procedure is a measure of transparency and a necessary tool of international engagement with the fate of the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons. Most important, though, the draft resolution before us resonates with the General Assembly's humanitarian mission. It sends a powerful signal to all those forcefully displaced in my country, as well as others in similar conditions all around the world, that the international community stands by them. We are also convinced that the draft resolution will give positive impetus to the ongoing Geneva process.

Despite the lack of progress over past years, hundreds of thousands of Georgia's IDPs and refugees have again vested their expectations in this house, hoping for a helpful decision from the General Assembly. All that they have, apart from that hope, are small sentimental items to help them remember their past lives: fading photos, keys to houses that may have been sold off, and their memories. We as a community of States must have a positive impact every time it is within our reach to do so. I believe that this is one of those cases. The General Assembly has an inherent responsibility to attend to the silent plea of the IDPs and refugees. I urge the Assembly to vote in favour of this draft resolution.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Draft resolution A/64/L.62, which is before the General Assembly, unfortunately has nothing to do with the noble humanitarian goals and concerns to which its authors refer. Furthermore, this initiative is exclusively political in its motivation and is based on short-term calculations by the Georgian party, which seeks to reject any responsibility for the situation that arose precisely because of the policies of the Georgian Government, culminating with the attack on civilians in Tskhinvali on the night of 7 August 2008.

The draft resolution is disconnected from reality. The sponsors of this initiative — stubbornly, to say the least — refuse to recognize the existence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as autonomous independent States. It is Tbilisi, through its aggressive posture, that has forever buried the notion of the possible return of those peoples to a unified State. The situation in the southern Caucasus was created not by some mysterious foreign plot, but by the actions of the Saakashvili regime.

With regard to the recommendations of the draft resolution, they are totally unrealistic in practical terms. As an example, I would refer to the idea of developing a timetable for the early return of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The authors of the draft resolution have not taken account of the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/64/819), which refers to the issue. Otherwise, they would have looked at paragraph 33 of the report, which says that

> "Given the prevailing environment and continuing discussions between the parties over status issues, it is premature at the present stage to develop a timetable for the voluntary return of all of the refugees and internally displaced persons who wish to avail themselves of this right".

The adoption of the draft resolution would do considerable harm to ongoing discussions in Geneva, in which we are considering the status of refugees and IDPs. The Georgian party fully understands that, but stubbornly continues to press its initiative. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General has said in his report, it is the Geneva process, in which the Abkhazian and South Ossetian parties are taking part, that provides the only way forward.

This is clearly not an attempt to alleviate the situation of those who find themselves forcibly displaced. The adoption of the draft resolution would serve only to detract from the realistic practical measures being taken in the region. It would not enhance confidence-building measures between the Georgian, Abkhazian and South Ossetian parties, which are a prerequisite for resolving other issues, including that of refugees and IDPs. Everyone must understand that, irrespective of their geopolitical assessment of the situation in the region.

Finally, given all these considerations, the delegation of the Russian Federation would like to move that no action be taken on the draft resolution and that a vote be taken in that connection. By refusing to consider such a politicized and confrontational initiative, the General Assembly and States Members of the United Nations would be doing much more for refugees and IDPs from Abkhazia and South Ossetia than by voting for the proposed, odious text.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has moved, under the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure, that no action be taken with respect to draft resolution A/64/L.62. The rule reads as follows:

> "During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote."

I would therefore invite delegations that so wish to speak either for or against the motion. There will be no more than two delegations speaking in favour and no more than two speaking against.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua supports the no-action motion on draft resolution A/64/L.62 moved by the representative of the Russian Federation. We believe that initiatives on such important issues as assistance to refugees and displaced persons should be the result of a broad consensus and the product of an open, transparent and participatory process, especially between the parties involved. We understand that the conversations taking place in Geneva under the joint chairmanship of the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the United Nations should remain the critical forum par excellence in which to address issues related not only to security and stability in the region, but also to humanitarian problems, including those regarding refugees and internally displaced persons.

The draft resolution before us today would considerably undermine the discussions taking place in Geneva. Such initiatives tend to promote partial measures that reflect only the viewpoints of one of the parties involved. They will not produce the positive results needed for this issue or assist in building a climate of mutual confidence between the parties. Therefore, the delegation of Nicaragua supports the

no-action motion and calls on other delegations to support it.

Mr. Ovysanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus notes the complexity of the issue of the status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, addressed in draft resolution A/64/L.62. There is no agreement on it between the main parties involved. The issue is being discussed in Geneva, and we therefore believe that the General Assembly should not adopt this draft resolution.

Mr. Parham (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom strongly urges delegations to vote against this motion. We do so for reasons of principle. A motion to adjourn an item sine die represents an attempt to prevent the consideration of a draft resolution on procedural grounds. The calling of such a motion aims at denying States Members of the United Nations their sovereign right to bring before the General Assembly any concern they themselves deem to merit its attention and at limiting the agenda of the Assembly. This runs contrary to the good practice of the General Assembly. No-action motions contradict one of the ideas on which the creation of the United Nations was based, namely, that issues of concern to Member States shall be addressed and discussed openly. Each proposal presented in the General Assembly deserves consideration on its own merits, so we strongly urge delegations to vote against this no-action motion regardless of their views and voting intentions on the substance of the draft resolution.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): The no-action motion that has just been moved seeks to prevent the General Assembly from considering a proposal that has been submitted to us for reasons of substance. France is opposed out of principle to such a motion. Indeed, the General Assembly should be in a position to discuss any subject, despite any difficulties there may be in terms of its substance. To submit such a motion is to seek to deny the States Members of the United Nations their sovereign right to submit to the General Assembly any concern that they consider to merit consideration by this organ. It is clearly contrary to the good practices of the General Assembly. For that reason, my delegation will vote against the no-action motion and calls upon other delegations to do the same, irrespective of their intention with regard to voting on the draft resolution itself.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the motion submitted by the representative of the Russian Federation that no action be taken on draft resolution A/64/L.62.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Armenia, Belarus, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Lao (People's Democratic Republic of), Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Serbia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tonga, Uganda, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the

Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates

The motion was rejected by 32 votes to 67, with 54 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Gabon advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

Mr. Viinanen (Finland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President: As the motion for no action has not been adopted, the Assembly will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/64/L.62.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tuvalu, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Armenia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nauru, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Serbia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Suriname, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Zambia

Draft resolution A/64/L.62 was adopted by 50 votes to 17, with 86 abstentions (resolution 64/296).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland would like to explain its abstention in the voting on resolution 64/296, introduced by Georgia and entitled "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia".

Switzerland underlines its support for the discussions held in Geneva following the 2008 conflict and agrees to provide on its territory the most favourable conditions possible for the handling of the issue raised by Georgia, in particular. As an unwavering aspect of its policy, Switzerland recalls the duty to give special attention to the status of internally displaced persons and refugees in post-conflict situations and to their right of return to their places of origin.

Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania): At the outset, I would like once again to reiterate my country's firm support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. Lithuania voted in favour of resolution 64/296 because we note with concern that no major development with regard to the ability of refugees and internally displaced persons to exercise their right of return has taken place since the adoption of the analogous resolution last year

(resolution 63/307). There are still hundreds of thousands of displaced persons in the area.

Lithuania sees this resolution as an important means for solving the plight of the affected population, in particular as it calls on all participants in the Geneva discussions to intensify their efforts to establish a durable peace and to create favourable security conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified and unhindered return of all internally displaced persons and refugees to their places of origin.

We also commend the Government of Georgia for adopting the Action Plan for Engagement (see A/64/875, annex). Its implementation will demonstrate Georgia's further commitment to this issue.

Lithuania also welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 63/307 (A/64/819) and supports its conclusions, which, among other things, reiterates the readiness of the United Nations to assist in implementing the agreed steps and measures, despite the continued lack of access remaining a major concern. We also fully support the Secretary-General in his urging all participants in the Geneva discussions

> "to engage constructively, with a genuine will to improve the situation of the local population" (*A/64/819, para. 36*).

Mrs. Intelmann (Estonia): Estonia voted in favour of resolution 64/296. Our decision follows from a strong and long-standing commitment to fundamental humanitarian principles.

The resolution deals with the plight of internally displaced persons in Georgia. Following the conflict in 1992, their condition has been of concern for many years. The armed conflict in August 2008 led to further displacement. Unfortunately, over the past year, no major positive developments have occurred. The situation requires continued efforts from all parties and international support and attention, including from the United Nations. We reiterate the importance of the Geneva talks, of which the European Union is a counterpart.

In 2006, Member States decided to include on the agenda of the General Assembly the item entitled "Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development", under which we have been able to discuss many important issues. Most of these issues remain unresolved.

While the resolution adopted today is humanitarian in nature, we cannot deny the fact that there are many unresolved, deep and long-standing political issues that have caused and continue to cause internal displacement in Georgia.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate its firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect of the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Çorman (Turkey): I am taking the floor to briefly explain our position. Let me first emphasize that, regardless of our position on the issue at hand today, we believe that it is the right of any delegation to bring an issue to the attention of the General Assembly and, if it deems necessary, to present a draft resolution.

I would also like to reiterate Turkey's firm and unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. We remain concerned that the conflicts in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia remain unresolved and that this situation has serious economic, social and humanitarian consequences.

In the prevailing circumstances, the Geneva talks provide a valuable forum to also address the issue of the voluntary, safe, dignified and unhindered return of internally displaced persons and refugees. We hope that the discussions in Geneva can be made to reach their full potential in order to have positive and concrete outcomes. To achieve that, we call on all sides to seriously engage with the others in a cooperative and proactive manner. We also call on all parties to refrain from taking any steps that would aggravate the situation of the displaced persons and to take action to build confidence.

Turkey supports all efforts aimed at the peaceful resolution of these conflicts and invites all parties to work towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace that would also provide for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees. As a country of the region and a neighbour of Georgia, my country stands ready to contribute to all efforts towards this end and will continue to engage with its regional counterparts and cooperate closely with its friends and allies. It is

our deep conviction that steps in that direction will enhance the stability and prosperity of the Caucasus region as a whole.

Mr. Palouš (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic decided to vote in favour of resolution 64/296. We are convinced that the situation of internally displaced persons and refugees in Georgia, which has not changed since this case was brought for the first time before this Assembly, requires the attention of the international community, including the United Nations.

The Czech Republic is strongly committed to the principles of international humanitarian law. We are well aware of the importance of the Geneva talks and sincerely hope for their success. We reiterate, in the context of this humanitarian crisis, which needs to be resolved, our strong support for the security and stability of Georgia, respecting fully its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

I call on the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Lomaia (Georgia): Together we have just adopted a resolution that lifts the hopes of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees who were forced by violence and fear to flee their homes and communities. It is with my mind on these brave men, women and children, citizens of Georgia of many ethnic origins, that I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the Assembly.

Today's vote marks the third straight year that the Assembly has invoked the norms and principles of international law to defend the right of every Georgian IDP and refugee to return to his or her home. And with each passing year, the circle of understanding and support is widening. It is our responsibility to help transform the anguished dream of my compatriots — to return to their homes in our country's region of Abkhazia and its Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia — into a reality.

I know that Members' support of this resolution did not come easily — a fact that had little to do with the substance itself. This makes their affirmative vote even more noteworthy. Unfortunately, the moral clarity that guides us all on this issue has been challenged once again by strenuous attempts to politicize these efforts. But truth and dignity prevailed.

Despite all the unfair attempts aimed at persuading delegations to oppose the resolution, it was adopted by an even wider margin than in previous years. But they may rest assured that my country is in no way embittered by the politics that preceded the vote. Quite the opposite — we remain as determined as ever to bring dignity and relief to our compatriots who have suffered for so long. We will engage with all parties, including those who led the opposition to this resolution, to achieve its goals.

Today the General Assembly upheld the principles of this institution and the norms of the international community. I wish that this were enough. I can only hope that, a year from now when we gather again to discuss this issue, true progress will have been made on the ground.

Finally, on behalf of those who have suffered violence and discrimination because they were of the wrong ethnic background, we would like to once again express our heartfelt gratitude to each and every Member State that voted in favour of this resolution. I would also like to express my gratitude to those delegations that shifted their position from a negative stance last year to an abstention today. These, too, contributed to the positive dynamic around this resolution. It will never be forgotten by the people of my country.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Karev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In the light of the statements that have been made on the outcome of the voting, I would simply like to emphasize that the results once again confirm that a certain group of countries continues to pursue a politicized approach to and double standards on this issue, to the detriment of the practical steps being taken to resolve the current humanitarian problem in the region.

It is those very same countries that obstinately deny the Abkhazians and South Ossetians the opportunity to inform the international community about the truth of the situation, including with respect to the issue of the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons. Those who voted in favour of resolution 64/296 will bear full responsibility for the consequences of its adoption, including with regard to the Geneva process.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 14?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.